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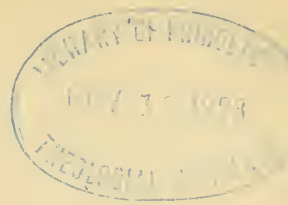
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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES:

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND HOMILETICAL.

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MINISTERS AND STUDENTS

BY

JOHN PETER LANGE, D. D.,

ORDINARY PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN,

IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF EMINENT EUROPEAN DIVINES

TRANSLATED, ENLARGED, AND EDITED

BY

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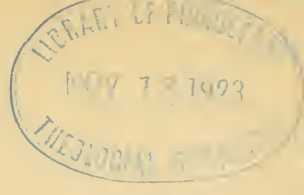
IN CONNECTION WITH AMERICAN SCHOLARS OF VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

VOLUME XIV. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: CONTAINING THE MINOR PROPHETS¹

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

1899



THE

MINOR PROPHETS.

EXEGETICALLY, THEOLOGICALLY. AND HOMILETICALLY

EXPOUNDED

BY

PAUL KLEINERT, OTTO SCHMOLLER,
GEORGE R. BLISS, TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, CHARLES ELLICOTT,
JOHN FORSYTH, J. FREDERICK McCURDY, AND
JOSEPH PACKARD.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE volume on the MINOR PROPHETS is partly in advance of the German original, which has not yet reached the three post-exilian Prophets. The commentaries on the nine earlier Prophets by Professors KLEINERT and SCHMOLLER appeared in separate numbers some time ago¹; but for Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, Dr. Lange has not, to this date, been able to secure a suitable co-laborer.² With his cordial approval I deem it better to complete the volume by original commentaries than indefinitely to postpone the publication. They were prepared by sound and able scholars, in conformity with the plan of the whole work.

The volume accordingly contains the following parts, each one being paged separately:—

1. A GENERAL INTRODUCTION to the PROPHETS, especially the MINOR PROPHETS, by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, D. D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago, Illinois. The general introductions of Kleinert and Schmoller are too brief and incomplete for our purpose, and therefore I requested Dr. ELLIOTT to prepare an independent essay on the subject.

2. HOSEA. By Rev. Dr. OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated from the German and enlarged by JAMES FREDERICK McCURDY, M. A., of Princeton, N. J.

3. JOEL. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. JOHN FORSYTH, D. D., LL. D., Chaplain and Professor of Ethics and Law in the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.

4. AMOS. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. TALBOT W CHAMBERS, D. D., Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New York.

5. OBADIAH. By Rev. PAUL KLEINERT, Professor of Old Testament Theology in the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. GEORGE R. BLISS, D. D., Professor in the University of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

6. JONAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago.³

7. MICAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. GEORGE R. BLISS, of Lewisburg.

8. NAHUM. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. CHARLES ELLIOTT, of Chicago.

9. HABAKKUK. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.

¹ *Obadjah, Jonah, Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephaniah. Wissenschaftlich und für den Gebrauch der Kirche ausgelegt von PAUL KLEINERT, Pfarrer zu St. Gertraud und a. Professor an der Universität zu Berlin. Bielefeld u. Leipzig, 1868. — Die Propheten Hosea, Joel und Amos. Theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet von OTTO SCHMOLLER, Licent. der Theologie, Diaconus in Urach. Bielef. und Leipzig, 1872.*

² The commentary of Rev. W. PRESSSEL on these three Prophets (*Die nachexilischen Propheten*, Gotha, 1870) was originally prepared for Lange's *Bible-work*, but was rejected by Dr. Lange mainly on account of Pressel's views on the genuineness and integrity of Zechariah. It was, however, independently published, and was made use of, like other commentaries, by the authors of the respective sections in this volume.

³ Dr. Elliott desires to render his acknowledgments to the Rev. Reuben Dederick, of Chicago, and the Rev. Jacob Lotke, of Faribault, Minnesota, for valuable assistance in translating some difficult passages in Kleinert's Commentaries on Jonah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

10. ZEPHANIAH. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.

11. HAGGAI. By JAMES FREDERICK MCCURDY, M. A., Princeton, N. J.

12. ZECHARIAH By Rev. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D., New York. (See special preface.)

13. MALACHI. By Rev. JOSEPH PACKARD, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia.

The contributors to this volume were directed carefully to consult the entire ancient and modern literature on the Minor Prophets and to enrich it with the latest results of German and Anglo-American scholarship.

The remaining parts of the Old Testament are all under way, and will be published as fast as the nature of the work will permit.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK, January, 1874.

THE
BOOK OF MALACHI.

EXPOUNDED

BY

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NEW YORK:
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MALACHI.¹

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The Prophet Malachi.*

THE Prophet Malachi is the last of the series of prophets, who, through successive generations, for a thousand years, "had showed before of the coming of the Just one." Not only had this remarkable order of inspired men predicted the coming Messiah, but they lifted up their voice, like a trumpet, to show God's people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. They were the teachers and preachers of the generations in which they respectively lived, and were thus the prototypes of ministers of the Gospel.

It has been a subject of doubt, from a very early period, whether Malachi was the real name of the Prophet, or an official title. The Septuagint translates Malachi "his angel." The Targum regards Ezra as the author of the prophecy, and is followed in this opinion, with more or less confidence, by Jerome, Calvin, Hengstenberg, and Umbreit. "I am disposed to grant," says Calvin, "that the author was Ezra, and that Malachi was his surname, for God had called him to do great and remarkable things." "We shall not succeed," says Ewald, "in finding the real name of the writer." No one has so strenuously opposed the common opinion, that Malachi was the real name of the Prophet, as Hengstenberg, in his *Christology of the O. T.* (2d edition Martin's translation), vol. iv. 156-161. He labors to establish a connection between the name of the Prophet, and the same word as occurring in its official signification, "*my messenger*," in ch. iii. 1. He maintains, that the formation of the word, and the absence of any reference to his father, or the place of his birth, go to show that it was not a proper name. But, on the other hand, we have no account of the personal relations of Haggai, Habakkuk, and Obadiah. The formation of the word, as a proper name, is not without precedent, as in Naphtali, Zichri. It would be contrary to the analogy of the prophetic books, it would weaken the force of the prophecy, and cast some suspicion upon it, if we regarded it as anonymous. We consider it then with Hitzig, as a proper name, and as an abbreviation of Malachiah, *servant of Jehovah*.

The time, in which Malachi prophesied, has also been the subject of some difference of opinion. All are agreed, from the internal evidence, that it was after the exile, which is not mentioned in the book. The temple was rebuilt, its service, together with the sacrifices, and feasts and fasts, restored. Some are disposed to put the age of Malachi at a much later date than others. Dr. J. G. Murphy (*Fairbairn's Imperial Dictionary*, art. *Mal.*) maintains, that he may have lived till the time of Alexander the Great, 331 B. C. Hitzig (*Comm. on Minor Prophets*) conjectures, that he prophesied about 358 B. C. But as we find Malachi condemning the very same abuses, which Nehemiah found existing in his second visit to Jerusalem, we may reasonably conclude, that they were contemporaries, and sustain the same relations to each other, that Haggai and Zechariah did to Zerubbabel, and that Malachi prophesied from 440-410 B. C.

To understand the prophecy, we must glance at the *circumstances* of the Jews, in his time. They had returned from the exile, as we learn from Nehemiah, in "great affliction and distress." The period of the exile had been a painful and humiliating one. They had been in the furnace of affliction. From the prophecies of Isaiah, and other prophets, they had expected even more than the restoration of their former blessings, but instead of that, they were under Persian governors, "who had dominion over their bodies." Now, while the

¹ I have been more brief in the Preface to Malachi, than I desired, from the brief space allotted me. — J. P.

exile was a great blessing to them in many respects, as it cured them of idolatry, and produced some outward repentance at least, as the tears, which they shed at Ezra's exposition of the law, testified, yet from the disappointment of their fond hopes, they fell into an ungrateful, murmuring, self-righteous spirit, complaining of God's injustice to them, as though they had claims upon Him, and provoking his divine majesty by a denial of his justice, and providential government. We see in the state of mind and heart of the people, the germs of that Pharisaism and Sadduceeism, which were full-blown in the time of our Saviour. They had relapsed, too, into their old sins of marrying heathen wives, which Ezra had sternly prohibited, and labored to reform.

Bishop Lowth here remarks, "that Malachi is written in a mediocre style, which seems to indicate that the Hebrew poetry, from the time of the Babylonish captivity, was in a declining state, and being past its prime and vigor, was then fast verging towards the debility of age." Gesenius classes him also in the *silver* age of the Hebrew language, and thus decidedly inferior to the earlier writers. On the contrary, Ewald, who is a competent, and certainly unbiassed judge, pronounces his style as not lacking in smoothness and elegance; and Kohler regards it as forcible and remarkably pure, for the time, in its diction and syntax, and his reasoning as concise and cogent. His descriptions of the original type of the priesthood, his prophecies of the sun of righteousness, of the Angel of the Covenant, and of the great and terrible day of judgment, are glowing and fervid. Ewald has remarked upon a peculiarity of his style — in his first laying down moral and religious axioms, as a foundation, and then reasoning from them, and refuting in the form of a dialogue any objections which might be brought against them. The prophecy of Malachi has been always regarded as one of great importance. The Church of Rome, it is well known, has found in the "pure offering," of Malachi i. 11, its principal proof-text of the doctrine of the Mass.

The contents of the prophecy are principally of a threatening character. After an introduction, in which the Prophet proves the love of God to the people, as the foundation of the following rebukes and exhortations, he turns, first of all to the priests, and threatens them with severe punishment for their open contempt of the law, and their unfaithfulness in their office.

The next rebuke is administered to those who had divorced their Jewish wives, in order to contract marriages with heathen wives. He rebukes the irreligion of the people, their denial of God's justice, and their withholding tithes and offerings. The Prophet assures them that the awful day of divine judgment, in which God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked, will surely come, and that God would graciously send his messenger Elijah the Prophet, before his coming.

The last words of the Old Testament, "The Angel of the Covenant, — Elijah the Prophet," have hardly died upon the ear, when John the Baptist, standing at the threshold of the New Testament, echoes the voice of Malachi, and cries out in the wilderness, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, as it is written in the Prophet, Behold, I send my messenger, before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before me."

§ 2. *Analysis of the Book.*

Most Commentators, following Jahn in his Hebrew Bible, and Introduction to the Old Testament, divide the prophecy into *six* sections.

1. Chap. i. 1-6. Introduction. Exposition of Jehovah with Israel. He proves his distinguishing love by comparing their condition with that of Edom, and thus refutes their complaint, that he has not loved them.

2. Chaps. i. 6-ii. 10. Rebuke of the Priests, for their offering unlawful sacrifices, and thus profaning God's ordinances, for their perversion of the law. Prophecy of the pure and spiritual worship of Jehovah among the heathen.

3. Chap. ii. 10-16. Rebuke of unfaithfulness in the marriage relation by marrying heathen wives, and divorcing Israelitish wives.

4. The sending of Jehovah's messenger to prepare the way for the unexpected coming of the Messiah, to judge, but not utterly to destroy Israel (chaps. ii. 17-iii. 7).

5. Rebuke of the people for withholding the legal tithes and offerings, and thus defrauding God (chap. iii. 7-13).

6. Prediction of the destiny of the righteous and the wicked. Exhortation to observe the law. Another Elijah to come. Threatenings, if they do not repent and flee from the wrath to come, of a curse of utter destruction upon the land.

§ 3. *Unusual Words and Forms in Malachi.*

Chap. i. 3. תַּנְפֹּרֶת, for הַנְּפִיז. The verb, רָשַׁע, i. 4. The combination of מַעַל, with לְ, i. 5. The meaning of מִכְנָה, i. 10, 11-13; ii. 13; iii. 4. The word נִיב, i. 12. The verb נָבַל, i. 14; the form מִיִּשְׁתָּה, i. 14. The unusual meaning of מִצְנֶה, ii. 1. The use of מִלְאֵךְ, ii. 7; iii. 1. The expression בִּרְיָאֵל נָכַר, ii. 11. The proverb עֵר וְעָפָה, ii. 12; the expression, אִשְׁתַּ בְּרִירָה, ii. 15. The form of the participle, שָׁנִיא, ii. 16; the title מִלְאֵךְ הַבְּרִירָה, iii. 1; the word בְּרִירָה, iii. 2; the construction in iii. 5, עֵינֶיךָ שָׁכַר. The verb קָדַרְבִּירָה, iii. 8; the proverb עַד-בְּלִיַּי, iii. 10; the word קִדְרִיבִירָה, used only in iii. 14; the proverb שְׁרֵשׁ וְצָקָה, iii. 19; the verb עָצַם, iii. 21.

§ 4. *Literature.*

Jerome, *Comm. in Mal.*, in his *Opera*, vol. vi., Migne's edition, Paris, 1845; J. Calvin on the *Minor Prophets* (Eng. translation by Owen), Edinb. 1849; David Chytræus, *Explic. Malachi*, Rost., 1568; J. J. Grynæus, *Hyponnemata in Mal.*, Geneva, 1582; Sam. Bohlius, *Malachias*, Rost., 1637; Sclater *On Malachi*, London, 1650; J. H. Ursini, *Comment. in Malach.*, Fref., 1652; Stock *On Malachi*, London, 1641; Poli, *Synopsis*, London, 1673; Marek on the *Minor Prophets*, Amst., 1701; Sal. von Til, *Malach. Illustratus*, 1701; J. C. Hebenstreit, *Interp. Malachiaz*, 1731; J. H. Michaelis, *Biblia Hebraica*, Halle, 1720; Joa. Wesselius, *Malachias*, Lubec., 1729; E. Pocock *On Malachi*, London, 1740; C. F. Bahrdt, *Comm. in Malach.*, 1768; J. M. Faber, *Comm. in Mal.*, 1779; Vitringa, *De Malach. Observationes*, 1712; H. Venema, *Comm. ad. Mal.*, Leon, 1759; J. Jahn, *Vaticinia de Messia*, Vienna, 1813; P. F. Ackermann, *Prophetæ Minores*, 1830; W. Newcome, *Minor Prophets*, London, 1836; E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Scholia*, Lipsiæ, 1836; G. R. Noyes, *New Translation of the Prophets*, Boston, 1837; F. I. V. D. Maurer, *Comm.*, Lipsiæ, 1837; E. Henderson, *Minor Prophets*, London, 1845; L. Reinke (R. C.), *Der Prophet Malachi*, Giessen, 1852; T. V. Moore, *Prophets of the Restoration*, New York, 1856; E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the O. T.*, 2d ed. vol. iv. pp. 156-258 (transl. by Meyer), Edinburgh, 1858; F. Hitzig, *Exegetisches Handbuch*, Leipz., 1866; A. Köhler, *Die Nachezilitischen Propheten*, Erlangen, 1865; H. Ewald, *Die Jüngsten Propheten*, Götting., 1868; Keil, on the *Minor Prophets* (Engl. transl. by Martin), Edinb., 1868; W. Pressel, *Commentar zu den nachezilitischen Propheten*, Gotha, 1870 (originally intended for Lange's *Bibelwerk*, but published independently); C. Wordsworth, *Comm. on the O. T.* (vol. vi.), containing *Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, London, 1872.

THE PROPHET MALACHI.

SECTION I.

CHAPTER I. 1-5.

God's peculiar Love to Israel above Edom.

1 2 The burden¹ of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved² you saith the Lord. Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons³ [jackals] of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished⁴ [ruined], but we will return [again] and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified⁵ [great is Jehovah] from⁶ the border of Israel.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

(A new translation will be given at the end of the Commentary.)

1 Ver. 1. — מִשָּׁאָה דְּבָר, found only together in Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1, followed by עַל, אֵל, to determine its relation to the object.

2 Ver. 1. — The LXX. have inserted, before "I have loved": Lay to heart, or, consider, as in Haggai i. 7, ii. 15.

3 Ver. 3. — מַלְאָכִים, a fem. pl. for מַלְאָכִים (so Ewald, Reinke) from מָלַךְ, Micah i. 8; Is. xiii. 22.

4 Ver. 4. — רָשָׁעִים, pual of רָשָׁע, to be destroyed, not from רָשָׁע, as our version makes it.

5 Ver. 5. — Great be Jehovah! praised as great and glorious. See Ps. xxxv. 27, xl. 17, where the same phrase occurs.

6 Ver. 6. — מֵעַל, over, above, Neh. iii. 28; Ecc. v. 7, not beyond the border, the land of Israel.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 1. The burden of the word of the Lord. Some of the recent German Commentators, following Vitranga, understand by burden (מִשָּׁאָה) nothing more than a divine speech, prophecy, or utterance, so that it would mean, "the speech of Babylon, Damascus, Egypt, Moab," instead of the burden upon these countries. Jerome remarks: "The word *massa* is never placed in the title, save when the vision is heavy and full of burden and toil." In this interpretation he has been followed by Hengstenberg, who has fully discussed the subject, and by Köhler and Keil. Henderson has translated it *sentence*. The connection in the first verse with *word* shows that it means something more, or it would have been superfluous. Eleven times in Isaiah (xiii. 1; xiv. 28; xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 1, 11, 13; xxiii. 1), in Ezek-

iel xii. 10; Hab. i. 1; Zech. ix. 1; xii. 1, it is followed by a prophecy of a threatening nature. In Jeremiah xxiii. 33, xxxiv. 36, the meaning burden, heavy prophecy is presupposed. The people, whenever they met the prophets, asked scoffingly, if they had received any new *massa*, or burden. "What is the burden of the Lord?" not believing that the predicted evil would come. As a punishment for their blasphemy God declares (ver. 39) "I will burden you." See Lange on Jeremiah xxiii. 33-40; Alexander on Isaiah xiii. 1.

To Israel, not concerning Israel, but to, as אֵל shows. By Israel is meant here not the kingdom of Israel as distinct from that of Judah, but the small colony composed of all the tribes who had returned to Judæa after the Captivity, and thus became the central point of the divine promises and threatenings. Those who did not return lost the name of Israel, while those who did were called Israel by way of eminence, as those to whom the

promises were made. Nehemiah and Ezra use the word Israel in the same way.

By Malachi, through Malachi. The Hebrew is, *by the hand of Malachi*. Köhler, Ewald, and Delitzsch have discussed the question, whether the prophecy, as it now is, was delivered orally to the people, and have concluded that we have only the substance of the more copious oral addresses of the prophet, at different times, brought together into one single prophecy. The Septuagint, as we have already remarked in the Introduction, has translated it, ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ, *by the hand of his angel*.

Ver. 2. I have loved you, saith Jehovah. The whole prophecy represents the relations of Jehovah to his people, first, as their Father and Lord, secondly, as their only God, and final Judge.

The Prophet introduces Jehovah as declaring his love to them, as the foundation of the rebukes, threatenings, exhortations, and promises, which follow. This love of Jehovah to them laid them under obligation to love Him in return, and to keep his commandments. It is because He loved the people that He rebuked and chastened them.

In reply to the people, who ask for proofs of Jehovah's love, he condescends to appeal to facts in their history, and in his dealings with them. that clearly prove this love. Was not Esau a brother of Jacob's? saith Jehovah, yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau. The question is put in this way, and the names of Jacob and Esau mentioned, rather than those of Israel and Edom, to call attention to the fact, that, though they were brothers, and sustained the same relation to Jehovah, so that it might have been expected, that He would have dealt with both alike, yet He had not done so, neither in their own persons nor in their posterity, so that judging from the results we might regard the one as loved and the other as hated.

That the word *hate* is not used here in its strongest sense, is clear from several passages of Scripture, as where Leah says that she was hated by Jacob (Gen. xxix. 33), and in Dent. xxi. 15, where the case is put of a man's having two wives, one beloved and the other hated, and in Luke xvi. 13, where it is said of a servant with two masters, that he will hate the one and love the other, and Luke xiv. 26, compared with Matthew x. 37, where the hating one's father and mother is interpreted by loving less. St. Paul, in Rom. ix. 11, refers to Jacob and Esau as illustrations of the purpose of God, according to election. Their history typified and conditioned that of their posterity.

Ver. 3. And his inheritance for the jackals of the desert. We are not informed when and by whom this utter desolation of Edom took place. Jahn and Hitzig ascribe it to the Persians, so also Köhler; Keil and others to the Chaldeans, fulfilling thus the prophecies of Amos, Obadiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

The word translated in the A. V. *dragons* should be rather translated, *jackals*, with the Jewish Commentators, and Ewald, Köhler, Umbreit, Reinke, Stier, Pressel. Our version follows Jerome, Luther, Calvin, Bochart, Cocceius, J. H. Michaelis, who translate it *serpents*, or *dragons*. The Septuagint translates it, δάματα ἐρήμου, *desert dwellings*, in which they are followed by De Wette (*Wohnungen*), Gesenius, Maurer, Rosenmüller, Rödiger, Fürst, Henderson, and Noyes.

The word in this form is found only here. We regard it with Köhler, Keil, and others, as the feminine plural of יָד. The masculine plural is

found, Ps. xlv. 20; lxiii. 10; Is. xiii. 22; xxxiv. 13; xxxv. 7; xliii. 20; Jer. ix. 11; x. 22; xlix. 33; li. 37; Lam. iv. 3 (where it is strangely translated *sea monsters*); and is translated in our version *dragons*. In Isaiah xiii. 22, Micah i. 8, they are represented as *crying and wailing*, so they could not have been dragons, or serpents.

Ver. 4. Whereas Edom saith, or rather, although Edom should say, we are ruined, but we will again rebuild the ruins, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, or Jehovah of Sabaoth. Hengstenberg has labored to show, in opposition to Gesenius, that Sabaoth is in apposition with Jehovah, and to be separated from it by a comma, as a special appellation of God. It is translated by the Septuagint, παντοκράτωρ (Almighty), twenty-four times in Malachi, and passes over into the New Testament in 2 Cor. vi. 18, *The Lord Almighty; the Almighty*, in Rev. i. 8; *Lord God Almighty*, Rev. iv. 8, and frequently.

While Israel was rebuilding its ruins, all the attempts of Edom to repair its desolations will prove abortive.

The border of wickedness. By the word *border* is meant here the land, with its inhabitants. When Edom fails to recover its former prosperity all men must acknowledge that it is a perpetual monument of God's wrath.

Ver. 5. Great is Jehovah over the land of Israel. Hitzig, Maurer, Ewald, Umbreit, Reinke, Noyes, Pressel, understand this clause to mean, that from the doom of Edom Israel will be forced to confess that Jehovah is not only great in Israel, but beyond its borders. Henderson, following Aben Ezra, connects, *from the border of Israel* with the *ye* of the preceding clause, *ye from the border of Israel*. But, as *beyond* is an unprecedented meaning of גָּדֹל, as Israel had no doubt that Jehovah ruled beyond the borders of Israel, we had better understand it to mean, that Israel, by contrasting its condition with that of Edom, will be more deeply convinced that Jehovah's government of his people Israel was a gracious one. As the future precedes the subject it had better be translated, says Köhler, as an optative, May Jehovah be praised! but it is more congruous to the context to translate it, Great is Jehovah over the borders of Israel! as in Ps. xxxv. 27, where it is to be translated, Great is Jehovah! See Alexander and Delitzsch on the 35th Psalm, also on Ps. xl. 17, where the same words occur.

DOCTRINAL, HOMILETICAL, AND PRACTICAL

W. PRESSEL: We cannot more correctly and fully express the meaning of these prophetic words, than the Apostle Paul has done in two passages in Rom. ix. 7, 11: "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children;" and, "Not of works, but of him that calleth:" for the Apostle as well as the Prophet recognizes in the relation of Esau and Jacob, and of the descendants of both, a striking example, that descent from one and the same patriarch is not the ground of one and the same election on the part of God, but that it is his free grace, which uses one as an instrument for the kingdom of God, and the other not, and according to which the one does not frustrate the saving purpose of God, through his want of faithfulness, and the other, in spite of all his efforts, does not obtain salvation for himself. And

yet, in the words of the prophet, as well as of the Apostle, the close connection of guilt on the part of the individual, with the rejection on the part of God, is also intimated. As much as in the Old Covenant the circle of revelation was limited, and necessarily so, to the people of Israel, so rich is this revelation, however, especially by the prophets in hints that the decree and glory of Jehovah should extend beyond the limits of Israel, if even at first only in the execution of his judgments, which were necessary to prepare the way among the heathen for the visitation of grace.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Ver. 2. As there lies in the address of Jehovah the key to the understanding of the history of our life, so there lies in the reply of Israel the key to the understanding of our hearts. The history of our life appears, according to it, as a history of love, wherein the bitter as well as the sweet have only our good for their end, and as a decree of love, according to which nothing is accidental, but all ordained from eternity. Our heart appears in it in its blindness, since though the proofs of God's love are very plain yet we fail to understand them, and in its ingratitude, and distrust the source of this blindness; or, the history of our life confirms to us what the Lord here testifies, and our perverse and desponding heart at least *thinks* what Israel here objects.

On ver. 3. May it be deeply impressed upon my heart what a happiness it is to be a Christian! for how does the heathen world appear to us, when we look at the blessings of Christianity! The heathen are by nature our brethren, as Edom was the brother of Israel, and yet what a waste and kingdom of Satan is the heathen world! In what light does Christianity appear to us, when we look at the curse of heathenism! What do we not enjoy in the knowledge of the love of God to us in Jesus Christ, and in communion with Him, and in all the blessings in heart and house, in the social and domestic circle, which flow to us therefrom, and yet how little have we deserved it, and how little is this blessing from step to step our work!

Ver. 4. The world's defiance of God's decree: It breaks down, He builds up; it builds, He breaks down.

On the whole section i. 1-6. The gracious election of God is the golden thread, which runs through not only the history of Israel, but through

the whole history of the kingdom of God upon earth; but it is yet neither an "order of merit" for us, it rather humbles and disciplines, and *spurs* us on; it is only a cord of love by which the Lord draws us, while it brings destruction to those like the children of Edom. Love and hatred in the heart of God! What does the New Testament say to this prophetic expression? What does the history of the Church of Christ say to it? What does the witness of the Holy Ghost in our hearts say to it?

Ver. 5. *Then and now!* Then, the word of promise sounded, Great is the Lord beyond the limits of Israel! and the promise found its fulfillment in the history of the mission to the Gentiles. Now, the word of promise sounds, Great is the Lord among Israel! and the promise finds likewise its fulfillment in the history of the mission to the Jews.

E. Pocock, Professor of Hebrew in Oxford and Canon of Christ Church: "*I loved Jacob,*" etc. The Apostle St. Paul, in Rom. ix. 11, improveth this argument from thence, that this love to the one and hatred to the other was declared, when those children were not yet born, so that it could not be said that one had deserved better than the other, and therefore his love to one above the other must needs appear to be of free grace and choice, electing one, and rejecting the other; and the distinction was both in their temporal and spiritual state. But the literal explication of the words requires no more than the particular effect of his love to Jacob's posterity and hatred to Esau's, here instanced in the utter desolation of Esau's country, and the restitution of Israel's, the punishment proving to the one utter destruction, to the other a fatherly chastisement.

[BISHOP WORDSWORTH, representing another school in the Church of England, remarks on vers. 2, 3: The doctrine, taught by St. Paul in Rom. ix. 13, which has been much misrepresented and distorted by some Calvinistic teachers, may be illustrated by the divine words here. The love of God towards Jacob, as St. Cyril remarks, was not without foresight of Jacob's faithfulness and piety as compared with Esau. The hatred of God towards Esau, "a profane person, who despised his birthright," was certainly no arbitrary nor capricious passion. And if we extend these words to Edom, we find it bringing God's judgments on itself by its unmerciful and revengeful spirit towards Israel. See Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Is. lxiii. 1; Ob. 8.—P. S.]

SECTION II.

CHAPTERS I. 6-II. 10.

Rebuke of the Priests.

- 6 A son honoreth¹ his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father [but if I am] where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O [ye] priests, that despise my name. And ye say, 7 Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer² [offering] polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table

- 8 of the Lord *is* contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *It is* not evil. And if ye offer the lame and sick, *It is* not evil. Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts?
- 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that He will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means⁴ [hand]; will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of
- 10 Hosts. Who *is there*⁶ even among you [O, that there were one among you!] that would shut the doors *for nought*?⁷ Neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept
- 11 an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and [indeed, Keil and Köhler] a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.
- 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord *is* polluted; and
- 13 the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, [its food] *is* contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it*! and ye have snuffed [puffed] at it, saith the Lord of Hosts; and ye brought that which was torn⁸ [stolen], and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But
- 14 [And] cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing¹⁰ [an unsuitable animal]; for I *am* a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

CHAPTER II.

- 1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment¹¹ [sentence, decree] *is* for you. If ye
- 2 will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart. Behold, I will corrupt¹² [rebuke, as in ch. iii. 11; Ps. cvi. 9; Is. xvii. 18] your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and *one* shall take
- 4 you away with it.¹³ And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. My
- 5 covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear
- 6 wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the
- 8 messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted¹⁴ [or made void] the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as¹⁵ [because] ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 6. — יִכְבֹּד is not to be understood as Jussive, in the sense of a son *should* honor, but as a future of custom or usage. The suffix in כְּבוֹדִי, my honor, is objective, as in Gen. ix. 2; Ex. xx. 17; Ps. xc. 11.

2 Ver. 7. — The first clause is the answer to the last clause of ver. 6. מִנְיָשׁ is used in Malachi ii. 12, iii. 8, and in Lev. ii. 8, Amos v. 26, of offering. מִנְיָשׁ, used in ver. 8: Offer it now to thy governor, is the more common word for offering.

3 Ver. 8. — No question. This greatly weakens its force.

4 Ver. 9. — Means (Hebrew יָד, hand.)

5 Ver. 10. — מִן, not causal, but emphatic, and partitive.

6 Ver. 10. — Who is there, etc., for: O, that there were! For the Hebrew idiom, expressing a wish, see Ps. iv. 7; 2 Sam. xv. 4, xxiii. 15; Job xix. 23.

7 Ver. 10. — הִנָּה, to no purpose, not gratis.

8 Ver. 13. — גָּזוּל, stolen, not torn.

9 Ver. 13. — מִתְּלָאָה For מִתְּלָאָה.

10 Ver. 14. — מִשְׁחָהּ. Fem. Part. Hophal. The old versions, and many modern commentators, punctuate it with a final Kamets, as masculine. It occurs in this form in Prov. xxv. 26. It corresponds to מִשְׁחָה, male.

11 Ch. 2, ver. 1. — מִצְדָּה, sentence.

12 Ver. 3. — נָרַו. This verb, translated "corrupt," occurs twelve times elsewhere, and is always translated: rebuke

13 Ver. 3. — לְכָה. Dative of disadvantage.

14 Ver. 8. — הִתְוָה, to make void.

15 Ver. 9. — כִּי, because (De Wette, *dafür*) (Köhler, *Diueil*).

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 6. A son honoreth his father, etc. Jehovah expostulates with the priests for the unnaturalness of their disobedience. They stood in a peculiar relation to Him, were under peculiar obligations to sanctify Him in the eyes of the people, and yet they had profaned his name, and made Israel to sin. Jehovah begins with an indisputable moral principle. No one would deny that a son was bound to love and obey a father, and a servant to fear and obey his master. But if I am a father. He speaks in a conditional form, though Israel could not deny it, as though He would leave it to Israel to acknowledge Him as such or not. Jehovah was the Father of Israel, and Ephraim was his son. He was without dispute their master.

My honor, my fear. The suffixes are used here in an objective sense, the honor due me, the fear of me. The priests, instead of confessing their guilt, with hypocritical self-righteousness deny the charge of despising Jehovah's name, and demand the proofs of this charge. Yet ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? A new sentence should begin with this clause.

The answer to this question is to be found in the first clause of ver. 7: Offering polluted bread.

This we regard, with Maurer and Ewald, as an answer to the question proposed in the last clause of the preceding verse. By bread is meant here not the *shew bread*, which was not offered upon the altar, but any sacrifices, as the mention of the blind and lame shows. Sacrifices are often called in the law, the bread or food of God; Lev. xxi. 6, 8, 17, 21, 22; xxii. 25; Num. xxviii. 2; Lev. iii. 11, 16. The bread is called impure, or polluted, because it does not correspond to the claims of God and to his law, which forbade the offering of a sacrifice with any blemish, such as blindness, or lameness, or any evil-favoredness; Lev. xxii. 20, 25; Deut. xv. 21. To pollute Jehovah is to offer polluted sacrifices. In proof of the charge against the priests, which they denied, Jehovah refers to what they said and did. They represent the altar as contemptible by their practice of offering sacrifices expressly forbidden.

The words, *There is no evil*, are not to be taken as a question, this would weaken their force, but are used in the sense of the priests, and in the mouth of the prophet are words of angry rebuke and bitter irony.

Ver. 8. The prophet now uses an *argumentum ad hominem*, to show that they had treated Jehovah with less respect than they would have treated any human governor. Offer it now to thy governor.

The word translated, *governor*, is found in Jer. li. 28; 1 Kings x. 15; Neh. ii. 7; v. 14, and means a heathen governor of a province. To accept a person, is to be favorably disposed towards any one, to espouse his cause.

Ver. 9. And now I pray you, beseech God, etc. The prophet proceeds to make an application of the illustration in ver. 8. If the governor will not receive worthless gifts, how much less will Jehovah!

The challenge to the priests to beseech God has been regarded by Jerome, J. H. Michaelis, and Hitzig, as an earnest call to repentance, and prayer for God's mercy. But as the parenthesis (*This has been by your hand!*) most naturally means, Such sins have been committed by you! and seems to be inserted to reiterate the charge, and silence any reply; as the question, *Will he accept your persons?* intimates that God will not do so, which is never the case where there is sincere prayer for his mercy, and as the next verse expresses a wish that the doors of the Temple were altogether closed, it is better to regard it with Calvin, Maurer, Ewald, Keil, Köhler, and Henderson, as conditional, and with a shade of irony. Should you intercede with God, will He accept any? The Septuagint puts it in the first person: "Shall I accept of you your persons?" The word מִנְּכֶם is understood by Keil and Köhler as meaning, *on your account*, but it is better to regard it, with the LXX. and Maurer, as partitive and emphatic: *No one of you*. The prophet adds: Thus saith Jehovah Sabaoth, that we may not forget that what he says was inspired of God.

Ver. 10. Who is there among you, or rather, O, that some one among you would even shut the doors of the temple! The first clause is to be explained in accordance with a well-known Hebrew idiom as a wish, 2 Sam. xv. 4; xxiii. 15; Ps. iv. 7; Job xix. 23. Jehovah is so provoked by their illegal offerings, and the spirit which actuated them, that He would gladly see his whole

worship discontinued. כִּי, though placed first, belongs to the whole sentence, and is emphatic. By the doors are meant the folding doors, which led from the outer court to the court of the priests, where was the altar of burnt offerings. The reason for this wish is given, that the priests may not light a fire uselessly, to no purpose, upon Jehovah's altar. The *for nought*, in the first clause in our version, is unnecessary. Jehovah characterizes their sacrifices as vain, because they did not accomplish their end. Jerome, Grotius, Henderson, understand by it *in vain*, *gratis*, without payment, and refer it to the avaricious disposition of the priests; but it is better to consider it to mean, *without an object*.

An offering (מִנְחָה), by this is meant not the unbloody sacrifice of fine wheat-flour, mentioned in Lev. ii. 1-15, but all kinds of sacrifice, as the context shows where only animal victims are spoken of, and from its use in this sense in Gen. iv. 4, where Abel's sacrifice of a lamb is called מִנְחָה, 1 Sam. ii. 15; Isaiah i. 13. Zeph. iii. 10.

Ver. 11. For from the rising of the sun, etc. In contrast with the sacrifice which Jehovah rejects, he declares, that the hour is coming when the true worshippers, not in Jerusalem only but in every place, shall offer a pure, a sincere offering in spirit and truth, and a living sacrifice of their souls and bodies to the name of Jehovah, which has been despised. What an insight into the most distant future! How much is involved in this prophecy? The kingdom of God taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, the abrogation of the old dispensation wherein the worship of the Father was confined to one place (Deut. xii. 13), the coming of the hour "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth:" the universal spread of Christianity. This prophecy is regarded by some of the Jewish Commentators, and by the Septuagint, and by Hitzig, Ewald, Maurer, Umbreit, and Köhler as a declaration of what was already the fact among the heathen who worshipped ignorantly the unknown Jehovah, under different names. If so, it would amount to the lines in Pope's universal Prayer:—

"Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!"

In opposing this view we first deny the fact. So far from the name of Jehovah being great among the heathen, and a pure worship offered Him, they were sunk into the most abominable and inexcusable idolatry, they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forever! It would be in conflict with other prophecies, Isaiah xi. 10; Zeph. ii. 11; Zech. ix. 10; Is. lxvi. 20, and many others, which speak of such a worship as in the future.

Pocock, speaking of this Jewish interpretation, adopted by Ewald and others, well says, "What is it less than even an *excuse*, or *apology* for, if not a *commendation* of idolaters, and idolatry, as from the mouth of God himself, who all along showed them and their ways to be all most abominable to him."

If incense is here meant prayer, of which it is a frequent symbol. This is admitted by the Roman Catholic commentator, Reinke, who observes, "that Malachi could not refer to literal incense is evident from the fact that the offering of incense could only take place in the temple." If this is true of incense, why is it not true of the offering in the same sentence, associated with it here and in the law (Lev. ii. 15)? Yet Reinke understands it with the Church of Rome, as referring to the "bloodless sacrifice of the New Testament, the holy sacrifice of the Mass." It is well known that the Church of Rome makes use of this text as its principal proof-text for the doctrine of the Mass. "That in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead." In the *Canons of the Council of Trent*, Sess. 22, we read, "that the Mass is that pure sacrifice which the Lord predicted by Malachi should be offered to his name in every place."

Whately remarks of such a use of Scripture to support certain practices, that "*the misinterpretation has sprung from the doctrine.*" The doctrine has arisen first, and then the texts of Holy Writ are assigned to support it.

"In religion,
What error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text?"

The Church of Rome appeals here as elsewhere to the almost unanimous consent of the Fathers. We may spend a little time in showing the unfairness of such an appeal, by quoting the principal passages in which they refer to this verse. They were governed by no fixed rules in their interpretation of Scripture, and were in the habit of accommodating every text which came to hand, to serve their purpose. An important distinction should be made between their *interpretation* and *application* of texts. They were given to a florid and ornate style, and their *rhetoric* has often been converted into *logic*. Köhler has very briefly brought together the principal passages from the Fathers, a synopsis of which we here give. Justin Martyr speaks of "the heathen offering to God, according to Malachi i. 11, the bread and cup of thanksgiving," but he proceeds to explain it, as used by metonymy for the true sacrifice of prayer and praise.

Irenæus also refers one passage to the elements of the Lord's Supper, but only in the sense, "that Christians *symbolically* offer bread and wine to God in proof of their thankfulness, and after the offering pray the Holy Ghost that he would render them the body and blood of Christ, so that those who received them might obtain forgiveness of their sins and eternal life." Irenæus regards faith, obedience, praise, righteousness, and prayer as the true sacrifices.

Origen, on Prayer, proves from our passage, "that every place is adapted to prayer."

The Apostolic Constitutions require "the faithful to assemble for prayer on the Lord's day, in order that, according to Malachi, their sacrifice may be acceptable to God."

Eusebius *Pamphilus* sees in Malachi i. 11 a prophecy of the abrogation of the Jewish ritual, "while Christians would offer to God the sacrifices of love, prayer, and remembrance of the great sacrifice, ἡ μνήμη τοῦ μεγάλου θύματος."

Jerome, in his Commentary, explains this passage as, "*spirituales victimæ sanctorum orationes Domino offerendæ.*"

Augustine understands it of "works of mercy either to ourselves or to others." "We ourselves are the best and noblest sacrifice." He speaks of the Lord's Supper as shadowing forth the self-sacrifice of the Church to its Lord.

Chrysostom quotes this passage in proof, that the worship of God in spirit and truth should take the place of the Jewish service. He calls the Lord's Supper only so far a sacrifice, as by the invocation of the Holy Ghost, the body and blood of the Lord are present for the enjoyment of the believers.

Cyril Alex., understands by this text in Malachi "the sacrifices of faith, hope, love, and good works which the heathen in the future shall offer."

We thus see with what justice the Church of Rome appeals to the Fathers, and from this case we may judge of others, *ab uno disce omnes*. There is not the slightest warrant to suppose any allusion to the Lord's Supper in this verse; nothing is more common than to use sacrificial terms borrowed from the Old Testament ritual, in a spiritual sense, of the sacrifices of praise and good works, of the royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, and of the bodies of believers as living sacrifices.

Ver. 12. But ye profane it. The prophet renews the charge of ver. 7 against the priests, that they profane the name of the Lord by offering defective animals.

And the fruit thereof, even its food. *Its provision*, that is, of the table, or altar, even *its food*.

Ver. 13. Ye say also, Behold what weariness! Instead of regarding their service at the altar as an honorable privilege, they look upon it as an oppressive drudgery. Ye snuff at it, you show without any concealment and publicly your contempt.

Ye bring that which was torn, or rather plundered. Two bringings are mentioned, the first preparatory to the second, when the victim was presented, ready for sacrifice. The verse closes with an appeal to the priests, as in ver. 8, as to Jehovah's acceptance of such sacrifices.

Ver. 14. And cursed be the deceiver. The ו here should be translated, **And cursed, cursed be he**, who, when the law requires a male, brings one of less value. The law permitted and enjoined sacrifices of female animals in some cases (Lev. iii. 1; iv. 32; v. 6).

We had better understand *corrupt* or blemished, (as in Lev. xxii. 25), with Keil and Köhler, as masculine, and not as feminine, as Ewald, Maurer, Hitzig, and regard the curse as pronounced upon any one who redeemed his vow with an inferior animal.

The argument by which this rebuke is enforced is, that Jehovah is a great king, "*Rex tremende majestatis*," and must therefore be served with reverence and godly fear.

Chap. ii. 1. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. The rebuke to the priests is now followed by a threatening of the punishment which would ensue, if they did not repent.

The word מצוה, commandment, is to be understood as in Nahum i. 14 in the sense of *decree, sentence*.

Ver. 2. I will curse your blessings. This has been understood by De Dieu, Rosenmüller, Hitzig, in the sense of *revenues*. Keil and Köhler interpret it of the blessings pronounced upon the people by the priests; these God will turn into curses; but it is not necessary to depart from the common and general sense of the word. **Yea, I have cursed them.** This is not a simple emphatic repetition of the proceeding "I will curse, as the LXX. (Κατάρασμα), the Targum, Vulgate, Hitzig, Umbreit, Reinke, and Henderson maintain, but as the וְיָמָה requires, is to be understood of what has already taken effect, the curse has begun. So Ewald, Keil, Köhler. The singular suffix attached to blessings is distributive, referring to every blessing.

Ver. 3. Behold I will rebuke your seed. *For you the seed*, is emphatic. In chap. iii. 11 we find the same word זֶרַע used in the promised blessing. *I will rebuke the devourer*, or the locust. In Joel i. 13 the priests are called upon to lament for the meat-offering withholden, because the seed is rotten. In Haggai ii. 17 we find, "I smote you with blasting and mildew." The passage in Joel shows, that though the priests did not till the ground, yet they were dependent for their tithes upon the harvest, so if the seed was cursed they would themselves suffer. This renders it unnecessary to change the punctuation of זֶרַע (seed)

זֶרַע (arm), with the LXX., Vulgate, Ewald, Reinke, Keil, Köhler, Pressel. Köhler has a peculiar view, that it refers to the arm which the priests raised to bless the people, but the hand

would more naturally have been mentioned. It is understood by other Commentators to refer to the perquisite of the priests — the *shoulder*, but they were entitled not only to the shoulder but to other parts (Deut. xviii. 3; Lev. vii. 32).

Still further to show how displeasing the conduct of the priests was in his eyes, Jehovah threatens that the dung of the victims, which was to be burned without the camp (Ex. xxix. 14; Lev. xvi. 27), should be spread on their faces.

And ye shall be carried to it. This clause has been differently understood, some making the dung the nominative, as the Vulgate, Luther, Calvin, Ewald, Reinke, Bunsen; others, *Jehovah*. It is better to regard the subject as indefinite, they, some one — the people, as in John xv. 6. "*They* shall gather them, and cast them into the fire," or, more according to our idiom, it is to be translated *ye shall be taken away with*, or to it, where it is deposited, ye shall be treated as dung, as God said to Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv. 10). The LXX. have, "I will take you to the same."

Ver. 4. Ye shall know that I have sent this sentence, etc. The word *commandment* is to be understood as in the first verse, as *sentence, decree of punishment*.

That my covenant may continue with Levi. Different interpretations have been put upon this sentence. Ewald, Reinke, Henderson, Rosenmüller translate it, *Because my covenant was with Levi*. Hitzig, Maurer, De Wette, Noyes, *That my covenant might remain with Levi*.

The view more generally adopted and advocated by Luther, Calvin, Umbreit, Keil, Köhler, Pressel, is, that *my covenant* is the predicate, and that the decree of punishment is to be henceforth God's covenant, *that* according to which he should deal with Levi, or the priests; the decree of punishment shall take the place of the earlier covenant with the priests. The objections to this interpretation are, that it is not plain and simple; that a different form of expression would have been made use of had this been the meaning, such as — *My decree shall be instead of my Covenant*; that covenant is immediately after used in its common sense; and that Levi, or the priesthood, is regarded as one throughout.

We may understand it as an elliptical construction. This decree is sent to you, that by your laying it to heart my covenant may be, *may continue* to be with Levi, as it was in the beginning, which he goes on to speak of; that you may not make null and void the covenant made in the beginning with Levi, and which Jehovah would have continued in his posterity.

Ver. 5. My covenant with him was (of) life and peace, etc. Jehovah now speaks of the nature of the covenant made with Levi, or the priesthood, in order to contrast the character of the priests with that of their pious predecessors.

My covenant with him was life and peace. These nouns are not in the genitive, as the Septuagint, Vulgate, and the English Version make them, but are the nominative of the predicate. It is not necessary to confine this description to Phinehas, as Henderson does, though in Num. xxv. 12 they are specially addressed to him.

And I gave them to him for fear. The design of the Covenant was to inspire him with holy fear and reverence. *For fear*, put by metonymy for the effect of fear; and the original priesthood corresponded to this divine intention: **And he revered my name.**

Ver. 6. The law of truth was in his mouth,

etc. His exposition of the law was according to truth, its true nature, and there was found in him no perverseness, no self-seeking, nor partiality. Thus he walked in most intimate and endearing communion with Jehovah, as did Noah and Enoch, in integrity of heart and life, and by his faithful instructions and warnings turned many to righteousness. Thus he fulfilled the design of the priesthood, which was to expound and apply to every case the will of God, as expressed in his law, and to be always ready to instruct the people. It was for this end the priesthood was appointed of God.

Ver. 7. The priest is an angel, or messenger of Jehovah to negotiate the grand concerns of judgment and of mercy. This is the only passage, with the exception of Haggai i. 14, where it is applied to the prophet, where we meet with such an application. Elsewhere it is applied to the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, in whom God revealed Himself, and through whom He transacted with man from the beginning.

Ver. 8. But ye have departed from the way. Jehovah now reminds the priests how very different they were from their pious fathers. They had respect of persons; they had taught for hire (Micah iii. 11). By their example and false expositions of the law they had misled many, and plunged them into sin, guilt, and perdition. They had made the law itself, instead of being a light and lamp to the people, a stumbling-block. As a just retribution for their sin, Jehovah will abandon them to the contempt of all Israel. According, in our version, should be rather, *because*.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

MATTHEW HENRY: "Nothing profanes the name of God more than the misconduct of those whose business it is to do honor to it."

Chap. ii. 7 (1). What is the duty of ministers? The priests' lips should keep knowledge, not keep it from his people, but keep it for them. Ministers must be *men of knowledge*, for how are they able to teach others the things of God who are themselves *unacquainted* with these things, or *unready* in them? They must *keep knowledge*, must furnish themselves with it, and retain what they have got, that they may be like the *good householder*, who brings out of his treasury things new and old. Not only their *heads*, but their *lips* must keep knowledge; they must not only have it but they must have it *ready*, must have it *at hand*, must have it, as we say, at their tongues' end, to be communicated to others, as there is occasion.

(2.) What is the duty of the people? They should seek the law at his mouth; they should consult the priests, and not only hear the message, but ask questions upon it, that they may the better understand it. We must not only consult the written Word, but must have recourse to God's messengers and desire instruction and advice from them in the affairs of our souls, as we do from physicians and lawyers concerning our bodies and estates.

Ver. 8. The feeling of proper reverence for God and the services of his altar would indeed alone have dictated that what was offered to him should be the best and most perfect of its kind. Even the heathen were sensible of this propriety, and were careful that their victims were without blemish or imperfection. Thus, Homer in the *Iliad*, i. 66, makes Achilles propose to consult some priest,

prophet, or interpreter of dreams to know whether the angry Apollo might not be, "Soothed with steam of lambs or goats unblemished." Cowper' *Transl.*)

MAIMONIDES says: "There were no less than fifty blemishes, enumerated by him, which rendered an animal unfit to be offered on the Lord altar."

WORDSWORTH: On ver. 7. *The priest's lips should keep knowledge*, a memorable statement. The offering of sacrifices was indeed an essential part of the priestly office; but Malachi declares that all sacerdotal sacrifices are of no avail without religious knowledge, sound learning, and wholesome teaching. The first duty of the Levitical Priests,—and how much more of the Christian!—was to keep, or preserve knowledge; the knowledge of God as revealed in his holy Word, and so to discharge their sacred office, that, according to the Word of God, the people should resort to them for instruction in holy things, and not resort in vain, and unless this was done by them all their offerings and sacrifices were nugatory, and God would "spread dung on their faces," in token of his displeasure. Here is a solemn warning to the Christian clergy. If such was the duty of the Levitical priesthood, and such the penalty of not performing it aright, how much more imperative is the obligation of the Christian Priest to "keep knowledge," and to instruct the people in sound doctrine; or, as St. Paul expresses it, "to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditate on these things, and give himself wholly to them," to speak the things which become sound doctrine, to hold fast the faithful word, so that he may be able by sound doctrine to convince the gainsayers. And how much surer will be his punishment if he fails to discharge it! It is to be feared that this warning is greatly needed at the present day. The clergy of the Eastern Church, especially in Asia and Greece, have been degraded to a low condition with regard to religious and secular knowledge. Celebrated Roman Catholic writers deplore the ignorance of a great part of their clergy, consisting of mere illiterate Mass-Priests. See Dr. Dollinger's *The Church and the Churches*.

In Protestant Germany the theological chairs of the universities are filled by those who have no pastoral experience in the cure of souls, and have none of that wisdom which is found at the side of sick beds and death-beds, and in church-yards at the grave, and have no mission from Christ, and no unction from the Holy Ghost; and many among them treat the Holy Scriptures as if they were a mere common book. Hence the theological teaching of the Schools has been divorced from the Christian Priesthood."

W. PRESSEL: The requisition of the Old Covenant that the sacrifices offered should be unblemished and perfect, and that by a defective sacrifice the altar of God and the offerer himself were polluted, grew out of the truth which Malachi here in most convincing language represents to the priests, that defective offerings betray a defective disposition, a want of reverence for the Holy God. In the New Covenant, where all sacrificial worship has ended, this rebuke applies to all divided service of God, to all half Christianity, and to all those Christians, who, not influenced by reverence of the Holy One, and by earnestness in sanctification, think to discharge their Christian duty by certain ceremonies or good works. Where this is the case with ministers of the Gospel there

is, as in the case of the Priests, double guilt, partly because they preach what they themselves do not practice, and partly, because they thereby cause a special scandal. The motives of the majesty of God, the example of the first priests, and the dignity of their calling to be a messenger of Jehovah, apply with no less force to those under the New Covenant. These arguments will have little effect, where personal thankfulness to God for his great love to us in Christ, and concern for our salvation through Him are wanting, but where they animate ministers of the Gospel, they must urge them to fulfill more truly and actively their high calling.

HOMILETICAL REMARKS BY PRESSEL.

The close connection of the first and fourth commandments. He only, who has a lively sense of the presence of his God and Father, will honor

and obey the fourth commandment, and he only, who knows what an earthly Lord and Father must require of his own, will feel himself impelled to obey the first commandment. In what way can we now pollute the table of the Lord? (1.) In the *Sacrament*, when we ourselves partake of it unworthily, or do not enough arouse the consciences of others. (2.) In *life*, when we allow in ourselves or in others committed to us, a half-way devotedness to the Lord.

How far does the seventh verse apply to a minister of the Gospel? He is still a Priest, so far as he should point to the sacrifice on Golgotha, and should bear his Church upon his interceding heart, and should bless them in the name of Jesus Christ. He is still a messenger of God to those committed to him, and should preserve his Word in the Church, should teach young and old out of it, and should testify fearlessly and faithfully what the Lord bids him testify.

SECTION III.

Against unlawful Divorce, and Marriages with Heathen Wives.

CHAPTER II. 10-16.

- 10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our
11 fathers? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the [holy people] of the Lord,
12 which he loves, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the *master and the scholar* [*the waker and the answerer*], out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the
13 Lord of Hosts. And this have ye done *again* [*as a second thing*], covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regard-
14 eth not the offering any more, or receiveth *it* with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore [*doth he not accept*]? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet *is*
15 she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one [*flesh*]? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal
16 treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth [I hate divorce] putting away; for *one* covereth violence with his garment [covers his garment with cruelty], saith the Lord of Hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 10. — בָּרַךְ to deal treacherously, to be unfaithful, is used in vers. 11, 14, 15, 16.

2 Ver. 11 — בֵּית is used here, as often, in the sense of worshipper, or servant. קֹדֶשׁ means here, holy seed, not holiness, as Henry, Scott.

3 Ver. 12 — יָכַרְתָּ jussive form. The master and the scholar. So Vulgate. A proverb like: *none shut up or* *est* (Deut. xxxii. 36); *the deceiver and the deceived* (Job xii. 16; Job xviii. 19); *son nor nephew*, to express totality by opposites. Out of the tents, is to be connected with "cut off."

4 Ver. 16. — The perfect with *vav* con. must here be translated as imperative, as in 1 Kings ii. 6.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

We have here a new subject without any connection with what precedes. The Prophet, in the name of Jehovah, rebukes their marriages with foreigners, and their divorce of their lawful wives. As his manner is, he first lays down an indisputable axiom as the basis of his reproofs.

Ver. 10. *Have we not all one Father?* Jerome, Calvin, and others understand by one father here, Abraham: Pocock, Scott, and Henry, Jacob. The obvious objection to this view is that Abraham was the father not of the Jews only, but of the Ishmaelites and Edomites. The best recent Commentators understand by it Jehovah. This makes it parallel with chap. i. 6, where Jehovah styles himself the Father of Israel.

Divorce is a violation of the relation sustained to Jehovah, as a common father, and it is dealing treacherously with our fellow creature, one against another (literally, a man against his brother); it is further a profanation of the covenant which Jehovah made with his chosen people, out of which there grew specific duties and obligations not to marry idolatresses, or the daughters of a strange God. The Prophet classes himself with the offenders, as it was a national sin. The Septuagint has changed the suffixes here, "Has not one God created you? Why have ye forsaken," etc.

The law of Moses prohibited all marriages with the heathen, lest the Israelites should be led into idolatry (Ex. xxxiv. 11; Deut. vii. 1-4).

Ver. 11. *Judah hath dealt treacherously.* He now proceeds to specify their sins. Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem are here only different designations of the same persons. Jerusalem is probably mentioned, to show that the sin was aggravated by being committed in the holy city.

The Prophet stigmatizes their unlawful divorce as an *abomination*, and as such to be classed with idolatry, witchcraft, and adultery. In the last clause he characterizes their intermarriages with the daughters of a strange god (or worshippers, by a well-known Hebrew idiom), as a profanation of the holy seed (Ezra ix. 2), for Israel was holiness to the Lord (Jer. ii. 3).

Ver. 12. *Jehovah will cut off*, etc. The Prophet denounces the judgment of Jehovah upon every one out of the tents of Jacob, who commits this sin. We must connect "out of the tents of Jacob" with *cut off*."

The apocoped form of the future expresses a wish that such may be the case. To express the universality of this judgment that *no one* should escape, not even in their posterity, we have a proverbial phrase, which has been variously interpreted. Our version has translated it, *the master and the scholar*, as the Vulgate, *magistrum et discipulum*. This too is the Rabbinical explanation followed by Luther, Pocock, Henry, Scott, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Reinke, Kell, Noyes, Henderson, De Wette, J. D. Michaelis, translate it, *the watcher and the answerer*. Calvin understands it of the *master and servant*: "Every one who was in power, and could command others," and by the *answerer*, "the servant, who received and obeyed orders." The Targum, Syriac, Ewald, son and grandson. Fürst, Munster, Hitzig, Dietrich, *the caller and the answerer*.

Ver. 13. *And this ye do as a second thing.* Henderson understands this of *time*, that the people had relapsed into their old sins in the time of Ezra, but it is better to understand it of a *second*

sin, in addition to marrying heathen wives, of divorcing their Jewish wives. The Septuagint reads it, *I hated*, and mistook the word.

The greatness of their sin is enlarged upon. Their divorced wives repair to the altar of Jehovah, there to pour out their hearts before Him and to complain of their cruel treatment, and to seek his help. The last clause of ver. 13 shows that Jehovah will not accept the sacrifice, nor bless the worshipper.

Ver. 14. *Yet ye say, wherefore? That is, wherefore doth He not accept?*

The people addressed refusing to be ashamed, and to confess their guilt, shamelessly ask the reason of their rejection. The Prophet now addresses each one personally. Jehovah has been a witness. Köhler understands this, as in Malachi iii. 5, of an *avenging* witness, but as we have in Gen. xxxi. 48 a similar expression, "*This heap is a witness between me and thee*," where the same words occur in Hebrew, we must regard it with Keil, Henderson, and others, as meaning that God was a witness to the marriage, or to the covenant made between the parties. The divorced wife is now tenderly called the wife of thy youth, who has been the choice of thy youth, the partner of thy joys and sorrows, and the wife of thy covenant, with whom thou didst make a covenant for life.

Ver. 15. *But did not he make one only. And yet had he a residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? He sought a godly race.* We come now to the most difficult verse of all others in the prophecy. There has been an extraordinary difference of opinion as to its construction and sense. Köhler styles it most justly a *crux interpretum*. The Septuagint translator seems to have given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. Not a spark of light can be struck from the words, and nothing but words. The subject under discussion is *divorce*. In the preceding verse, to add sanctity to the marriage tie, Jehovah is said to have been a witness of it, and the wife is to be regarded as bound by a solemn covenant to the husband. What more natural now than that the prophet should recall the institution of marriage in the beginning, as of divine sanction? This would be a conclusive argument, and is the very one our Saviour made use of, when speaking of divorce, "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be *ONE FLESH*, wherefore, they are no more twain, but *one flesh*." The argument is introduced abruptly. Did not Jehovah make one? The word אֶחָד , to a Jew, perfectly familiar with אֶחָד אֶשְׁרָף in Genesis, would immediately suggest the one *flesh*, the one pair, of Gen. ii. 24.

And wherefore one? In the Hebrew, *one* has the article, אֶחָד־אֶשְׁרָף , and must be understood of the same subject with the preceding, אֶחָד . And wherefore did he make one pair? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit? This applies most naturally to the life-giving spirit of God—his creative power, not exhausted, for He might have made many women for one man.

That he might seek a godly seed. The design of God was to perpetuate a godly seed. This is counteracted by frequent divorce.

Most English commentators adopt this interpretation. Another view has been advocated by Jerome, Ewald, Reinke, Böttcher, and others, which makes Jehovah the *subject*, instead of the *object*. They are led to this view by verse 10, "*Hath not one God created us?*" They therefore translate it, "And did not one (the same God) create them, And what did the **ONE** seek?"

Another class of commentators refer the one to Abraham, and translate the clause, But did not the single one do it? And yet a divine Spirit remained to him. But what did the single one do? They regard the one as a designation of Abraham, and found their opinion on Isaiah li. 2, *I called him alone*, and Ezekiel xxxiii. 24, where Abraham is spoken of as one in opposition to the many of the people. In both these passages there is an express mention of Abraham, which is not the case here. They consequently understand, *Yet had he the residue of the Spirit* as meaning, that he remained a good man.

Still another interpretation is adopted by a considerable number of commentators, that there is no question but a simple affirmation: **לֹא אֶחָד** is to be translated *no one*, that the object of *made* is to be supplied from the previous sentence, that by the residue of the spirit is meant, *any portion of reason, any sense of right and wrong*. The one of the second clause they refer to Abraham. The whole verse would then be translated, "*No one, who has a sense of right and wrong, has done what you are doing. And what did the one do?*" They suppose that the guilty parties were wont to appeal to the case of Abraham to justify their conduct, and that the answer shows that his case was no precedent. There are very serious objections to this view. We have to supply the object of

וַעֲשֶׂה, made, and the predicate of **וַיִּתֵּן** in the second clause. The position of **וְלֹא**, and the question in the second clause, render it probable that it is a question. Had the Prophet meant to say, that no one ever did so, he would have used **וְלֹא אֶחָד**, as Gen. xxxix. 11, or simply **אֶחָד**.

Further, to understand the *residue of the spirit* of any reason, or moral sense, is strained, and lastly, **וַיִּתֵּן** refers to two different subjects, according to this view, first, to "*no one*," and, secondly, to Abraham, though the article is used, referring it back to the former.

There is an interpretation adopted by Fairbairn and Moore, which refers the one to the one *chosen seed*, the holy nation, but this strikes us as by no means so consistent and forcible as the one which refers it to the one flesh.

Ver. 15. Therefore take heed. Then follows a warning against the sin rebuked. The perfect with *vav* must be translated as imperative, as is often the case. To take heed to your spirit is to take heed to yourself (Deut. iv. 15; Joshua xxiii. 11).

Let no one deal treacherously. The third person is here used for the second in the previous clause. This is often the case where there is no change of subject. There is no advantage in following the LXX. and retaining the second person.

Ver. 16. For I hate divorce. The Prophet here gives the reason of the warning. Jehovah says, "*I hate divorce*." The LXX., Vulgate, and Luther, construe this very differently as a permission of divorce; *If thou hate her put her away*. But this is inconsistent with the context, which

condemns divorce; it is in opposition to the law which permits divorce only for some great misconduct, "*some unclean thing*," and which (Deut. xxi. 15) requires the husband to maintain a hated wife. In favor of the translation, adopted by Köhler, Keil, Henderson, *I hate divorce*, may be urged, that the form may be considered as a participle, that the first person is often understood before participles, that, saith Jehovah, God of Israel, which follows in the Hebrew, implies that Jehovah is speaking directly in his own person.

Ver. 16. And him who covers with violence his garment. The design of this clause, parallel to and coördinate with, *I hate divorce*, is to express more emphatically the consequences and enormity of the sin, that it is exceedingly heinous, and the height of cruelty. We read in Ps. cix. 18, 29, of being clothed with cursing as with a garment, of being clothed with shame. We find the same construction of **כִּסָּה** with **עַל** in Num. xvi. 33; Ps. cvi. 15; Hab. ii. 14, where the object covered is preceded by **עַל** as here. "The earth covered them," "And covered the company of Abiram," "As the waters cover the sea." We therefore understand the relative, which is frequently omitted, and regard this clause as the continuation of the preceding, "*I hate divorce*," only with a more emphatic statement. Most of the recent commentators understand by his garment, his wife. This, says Köhler, is a very uncertain and rare Arabic idiom, and contrary to all Hebrew usage. Nor is it at all necessary, as the interpretation we have given does not introduce a different idea, and is confirmed by the following, "saith the Lord of Hosts."

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

The frequency of divorce in the United States, so that in one of the States divorce is allowed for "misconduct," reveals the same state of things existing now, as was here condemned by Jehovah, and must bring with it the same evils, and the same punishment. What tongue can adequately tell, what heart conceive, the untold misery from this cause, especially to the deserted wives, and the children left without a mother's care! How little is the indissoluble nature of the marriage relation regarded! and the fact, that the Lord was the witness of it, and will be a swift witness against those who violate it! The Saviour only allows of one cause of divorce, and regards divorce for any other as adultery.

MATTHEW HENRY: "The poor wives were ready to break their hearts, and not daring to make their case known to any other, they complained to God, and covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying. This is illustrated by the case of Hannah, who, upon the account of her husband's having another wife (though otherwise a kind husband) and the discontent thence arising, *fretted and wept*, was in *bitterness of soul*, and *would not eat*. It is a reason given why husbands and wives should live in holy love, that their prayers be not hindered. The Lord has been witness to the marriage covenant between thee and her, for to Him you appealed concerning your sincerity in it and fidelity to it; He has been a witness to all the violations of it, and is ready to judge between thee and her. It is highly aggravated by the consideration of the persons wronged and abused. First, she is thy wife, thy own, bone

of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh ; the nearest to thee of all the relations thou hast in the world, and to cleave to whom thou must quit the rest. *Secondly.* She is the wife of thy youth, who had thy affections when they were at the strongest, was thy first choice, and with whom thou hast lived long. *Let not the darling of thy youth be the scorn and loathing of thy age.* *Thirdly.* She is thy companion ; she has long been an equal sharer with thee in thy cares and griefs and joys. *Fourthly,* she is the wife of thy covenant, to whom thou art so firmly bound, that, while she continues faithful, thou canst not be loosed from her, for it was a covenant for life. Married people should often call to mind their marriage vows, and review them with all seriousness, as those that make conscience of performing what they promised.

MOORE : The phrases, "wife of thy youth," and "companion" are thrown in to show the aggravated nature of this offense. "She whom you thus wronged was the companion of those earlier and brighter days, when in the bloom of her young beauty she left her father's house, and shared your early struggles, and rejoiced in your later success ; who walked arm-in-arm with you along the pilgrimage of life, cheering you in its trials by her gentle ministry ; and now, when the bloom of her youth is faded, and the friends of her youth have gone, when father and mother whom she left for you are in the grave, then you cruelly cast her off

as a worn-out, worthless thing, and insult her holiest affections by putting another in her place." There is something very touching in these allusions to the aggravations of this wrong, arising from the tender associations and memories of youth.

PRESSEL, on ver. 10 : *Have we not all one Father ?* No faith without love, and no love without faith. He who keeps the Father and Creator of all men before his eyes must love all men as his brethren, and he who recognizes in other men his brethren must in the Creator of all men love the Father. The prophet's mode of reasoning is not unlike that of the Apostle John in his First Epistle, iii. 17 ; iv. 11, 20, 21. The reference of the prophet to the Heavenly Father is a glimpse in the Old Testament of a doctrine which was not fully brought to light till the time of the New Testament.

On ver. 14. *Jehovah is witness between thee and the wife of thy youth.* This might be made use of as a solemn warning by a minister against divorce, whether intended or accomplished, as it represents to us the sanctity of marriage, and at the same time awakens in the hearts of the married all lovely and sweet recollections.

On ver. 15. He who regards the divine Spirit within us will be proof against the lusts of the flesh. He who indulges these lusts drives away from his heart more and more the residue of the divine Spirit.

SECTION IV.

The sending of Jehovah's Messenger. The coming of the Angel of the Covenant to judge, but not to utterly destroy Israel (Ch. ii. 17-iii. 7).

- 17 Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, wherein have we wearied Him ? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them ; or, Where is the God of judgment ?

CHAPTER III.

- 1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly¹ [unexpectedly] come to his temple, even the messenger [angel, ἀγγέλός, LXX.] of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold,
- 2 he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when He appeareth ? for He is like a refiner's fire, and
- 3 like fuller's soap [lyc] ; And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they
- 4 may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord as in the days of old, and as in
- 5 former years. And I will come near to you to judgment : and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress^a the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside [Plural. The Keri reads singular] the stranger from his right, and
- 6 fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts. For I am the Lord,⁴ I change not [For I, Jehovah, change not] ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

- 1 Ver. 1. — מַלְאָכִי, not immediately (*statim* Jerome), but unawares, unexpectedly, LXX. suddenly. Messenger, corresponding to angel in Greek, Angel of the Covenant, identical with the Lord, מַלְאָכִי. This form is always spoken of Jehovah; Ex. xxiii. 17; Ps. cxiv. 7; Is. i. 24.
- 2 Ver. 5. — מַלְאָכִי, swift, corresponding to מַלְאָכִי, verse 1, unexpectedly.
- 3 Ver. 5. — מַלְאָכִי, followed by a neuter object only here, and in Micah ii. 2.
- 4 Ver. 6. — Jehovah is not the predicate, but in apposition with I: the parallel, ye sons of Jacob, shows this.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 17. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. This verse should have been the first verse of the third chapter, for a new subject begins here, having no very close connection with what precedes. The prophet is here opposing the unbelief of a class, who, like the Pharisees, served God, kept his ordinance, and walked mournfully before Him, but who lost their faith in Providence, when God delayed to punish the wicked, and who complained, not in words perhaps, for, as Cocceius remarks, "Scripture is wont to ascribe to the wicked expressions suitable to their character," — that He treated all alike, for if this was not the case, why did He not punish the wicked? That by the "doers of evil" here, and by the sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, and oppressors of ch. iii. 5, and by the proud (ch. iii. 15), are meant sinners of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles, seems perfectly evident, for these were offenses against the law of Moses. The prophecy had nothing to do with the heathen, who were without the pale of the Covenant. Such a denunciation of God's judgment upon the heathen would have gratified the haughty and intolerant spirit of the Jews. Strange to say, this reference has been made by Jerome, Hengstenberg, Hitzig, Reinke, Bunsen, Keil. The burden of the third chapter is, Maranatha! The Lord cometh!

Ch. iii. 1. Behold, I will send my Messenger. The prophet now opposes to the unbelief of the people Jehovah's own word. He will come for judgment, but before his coming, He will send his messenger to prepare his way. It is not said, a Messenger, but *his* Messenger, the one familiar to them from Isaiah's prophecy (ch. xl. 3), where the Hebrew words, to prepare the way, are identical with those here. The *crier* of Isaiah is here described as the Messenger of Jehovah. In both prophecies his office is the same. That Malachi is not here speaking of himself, nor of an ideal person, in whom the whole prophetic order culminated, as Hengstenberg maintains, is clear from the fact that this messenger is called in ch. iv. 5 Elijah, the prophet; that our Lord, speaking of John the Baptist, declares, "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee" (Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27), and that Mark makes use of this prophecy as fulfilled in John, quoting it, indeed, as from Isaiah, because he was the Major Prophet, according to Tregelles' text of Mark i. 2: "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God, and he shall go before him (i. e., the Lord, their God, the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord of Malachi iii. 1) in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 16).

Chap. iii. 1. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple. even the An-

gel of the Covenant. The Lord, whom ye seek refers back to the preceding verse, where is the

God of Judgment? The word Lord, יְהוָה, with the article, is applied only to God. In the parallel clause, *even the angel of the covenant*, he is designated by a peculiar title expressing his office, as this is the only place where this official title occurs, it requires explanation.

From a very early period we find mention of an extraordinary Messenger, or Angel, who is sometimes called the *Angel of God*, at others, the *Angel of Jehovah*. He is represented as the Mediator between the invisible God and men in all God's communications and dealings with men. To this Angel divine names, attributes, purposes, and acts are ascribed. He occasionally assumed a human form, as in his interviews with Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and his wife. He went before the camp of Israel on the night of the Exodus. In Exodus xxiii. 20, Jehovah said, "Behold, I send an angel before thee to bring thee into the place, which I have prepared. My name is in him." In Isaiah lxiii. 9 he is called the *Angel of his Presence*, or *face*, where there is a reference to Ex. xxxiii. 14, 15, where Jehovah said to Moses, "My presence (or Hebrew, *My face*) shall go with thee, and Moses said, If thy face go not with us, carry us not up hence." He is called the *face of God*, because though no man can see his face and live, yet the Angel of his face is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. In him Jehovah's presence is manifested, and his glory reflected, for the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. There is thus a gradual development in the Old Testament of the doctrine of the incarnation, of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, not brought to light fully, lest it should interfere with the doctrine of the unity of God. (For a more full discussion of the Angel of Jehovah, see Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 161, Keith's Translation; Lange *On Genesis*, p. 386; Keil *On Genesis*, p. 184).

We would further remark that *of the Covenant* has been understood by most Commentators, as referring to the New Covenant of which Jesus is the Mediator (Heb. ix. 15). Köhler and Keil understand by it the Old Covenant, in which God promised to dwell with his people. In that case, the Angel is the Mediator of the Old Covenant. But we need not restrict it to either, but consider it applicable to both, to all God's covenant relations to man. Behold he shall come must be predicated of the covenant angel.

Ver. 2. But who may abide the day of his coming. We find similar language in Joel ii. 11: "The day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" The question, who shall abide it, is an emphatic negative, no one can abide it. As the Lord is a righteous judge, the day in which He comes must be a day of decisive judg-

ment. As Augustine says, "The first and second advent of Christ are here brought together." Malachi sees the great white throne in the background. In the last clause of this verse he gives the reason why it is impossible to endure it, since He is like the fire of the refiner, which separates all dross, and like the lye of the washer, which cleanses all stains.

The word *סֹפֶר*, which is translated in our version *soap*, occurs only here and in Jeremiah ii. 22. Soap was unknown to the ancients, and this was a vegetable substance, from the saltwort, which was burned and water poured on its ashes.

Ver. 3. **And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.** In the second verse the Lord is the fire; here by a slight change in the figure, he is the smelter, who lets the pure metal flow off, while the dross remains behind. *He shall sit* is pictorial to make the figure more striking.

This judgment begins at the house of God, with the priests who stand in the closest relation to Him. This purification will result in the cutting off the impenitent, and in the reformation of those who repent, so that they offer sacrifices in a proper state of heart, in righteousness.

Ver. 4. **Then shall the offering, etc.** When the priests are thus purified, then the sacrifice of the whole nation will be acceptable, as in the early and better times, as in the days of David, to the Lord. The Masora remarks, that the prophetic lesson for the Sabbath before the Passover begins here and ends with the prophecy. This lesson was selected because of the injunction in ch. iii. 4, to remember the law of Moses.

Ver. 5. **And I will come near to you to judgment.** The prophet proceeds to show that the coming judgment will not be only upon the priests but upon all the people. He will practically convince the wicked by his judgment, and that too unexpectedly, and thus will be a swift witness. The sins specified here were all sins against the law of Moses, some of them to be capitally punished. The Jews were very much addicted from this time onward, as Josephus and the New Testament testify, to sorcery, or witchcraft. The *oppressors* are mentioned. Those who *oppress* the wages of the hireling. This verb is followed by the accusative of the person, excepting here, and in Micah ii. 2. *That turn aside the stranger* (Deut. xxvii. 19), or oppress him. The tenderest love to the stranger is everywhere breathed in the law (Ex. xxiii. 9; Deut. x. 17, 18; Deut. xxvii. 19).

Ver. 6. **For I Jehovah change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.** Jehovah is not here the predicate, as in our version and Luther's, but is in apposition with the pronoun *I*, in contrast with the sons of Jacob. *For* is causal. It is because Jehovah is unchangeable in his gifts and calling, that He will not suffer Israel wholly to perish, though their sins deserved their destruction. He must accomplish his purposes of mercy. Köhler finds in the phrase *sons of Jacob*, an intimation that they resembled Jacob in character before he became Israel, but it is better to regard it as an emphatic expression for the covenant nation. These do not perish, because their existence rests upon the promise of the unchangeable God, as Moore remarks, "The sons of Jacob shall not be consumed, the seed of Christ shall not perish. The unchangeableness of God is the sheet-anchor of the Church."

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

E. POCCOCK: On chap. iii. 1. He should come *unawares* when men should not think on or be aware of Him. By the temple no doubt is meant the temple at Jerusalem, then lately built after their return from the Babylonish captivity, which, whatever alterations were made in it, was still looked upon as one till the time it was destroyed by the Romans; and by the Jews called the *Second Temple* in respect to that former, built by Solomon, and destroyed by the Chaldeans. To this temple it is here said, that the Lord here spoken of should come; and so did Christ whom we say to be that Lord; and of his coming to it and his appearances there at several times we read, *He was there first presented by his mother* (Luke ii. 22); there again, when He was twelve years old, found sitting among the doctors (ver. 46), where, in his answer to his mother who told him that they had sought Him sorrowing, He may seem to allude even to this prophecy, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Was it not foretold that He should come to the temple? Was not that the proper place for Him to be in, and for them to look after Him in? Several other times we read of his going to it, preaching in it, received with Hosannahs, exercising his authority in it, in purging it, and vindicating the dignity of it, and driving out thence those that profaned it. Any of these appearances there is sufficient to prove in and by Him to have been made good that which we take to be the main drift of this expression in this prophecy, namely, that the Lord (Christ or Messiah) here spoken of was to come while the temple (that temple then built) was standing; which is likewise evidently foretold by the Prophet Haggai (ch. ii. 7), that *into it should come the desire of all nations*, and it should be filled with glory, yea, that thereby *the glory of that latter house should be greater than that of the former* (ver. 9), though it were then in their eyes as nothing in comparison with it (ver. 3).

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

PRESSEL, on ver. 17. *Where is the God of judgment?* The judgment of the world and of Scripture as to the riddle of human destiny; or, *there is a God*, who lives to avenge and punish,—a truth which even men of the world admit, but which only lovers of the truth rightly understand. *Ye have wearied, etc.* Whereby is the God of infinite patience wearied? Not by our prayers. Not even by our infirmities, but indeed by our hardness and stubbornness, which will not confess our guilt, and be converted.

On ch. iii. 1. Though there are quotations from the Old Testament in the New, which are to be regarded only as an application, though never a random one, of the language of the Old, yet, in all the quotations, which are accompanied by an explanation from the Lord Himself, or his Apostles, we have the most certain commentary, which informs us how the Old Testament writer himself understood, and how he would have others understand his prophecy. On this ground, such an interpretation of Mal. iii. 1, as Hengstenberg and others have given, is untenable; for when the Lord Himself (Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27) says, "This is he of whom it is written," we must understand by, "my messenger," a definite person, first named by Mal

achi, and not the collective body of the prophets, extending down to John the Baptist. If there is to be a second coming of our Lord, it may be assumed that the prophecy before us will be fulfilled in all its particulars, and for the very reason that Malacii knows no difference between a first and second coming of the Lord, and his Messiah. Now it cannot but be expected, that the second coming of the Lord will be accompanied with the same purification as the first was in the children of Israel, and that the process of this purification will have the same general cause and result. Though this is to be expected, it by no means follows that this will be accomplished by a second sending of John the Baptist, or by the sending of only one man, after the manner of Elijah, since the person of the Lord Himself is carefully to be distinguished from that of his forerunner: the Lord is one; the forerunner, whether John or Elijah, may be more than one: the Lord is for all nations; Elijah and John only for the people of Israel; and when the second coming of the Lord is at hand, there may be also among the different nations of the world, different messengers, like Elijah and John, to prepare the way of the Lord, as indeed the Revelation of John speaks, in the eleventh chapter, of two such witnesses.

On ver. 5. We need only further remark, that between the first and second coming of our Lord, a process of purification takes place in portions of Christendom, by virtue of which the impure elements will be cast off, the hollowness and profanation of God's service and the Christian character will be exposed, and the true Christian will go to meet his future glory, as after all his inevitable, and often fiery trials, he reflects the image of his God and Saviour.

Among the commentators on the Prophets, we must reckon the great Handel, for he has in such a way illustrated to the world their most weighty prophecies in his Oratorio of the Messiah, that we cannot read them without being reminded of his musical commentary, and thereby be inspired, as it were, to interpret them. This is especially true of this last prophecy of the Old Testament.

On chap. iii. 1: *Behold, the day cometh!* Two Advent questions: Dost thou believe in the coming of the Lord in humiliation? and dost thou hope for his coming in glory? The world may believe or not, the Lord cometh: the world may prepare itself, or not, the Lord judges. This first Advent teaches us the former, and his second Advent teaches the latter. After perhaps the hymn has been sung, "All Christians wait for thee, O Son of God!" **can** we also say, "And love thy appearing."

The Lord once said, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed," and it remains true down to the second coming. Notwithstanding God calls to his people, Behold! for true faith has its eyes open for that which happened at the first coming of the Lord, for that which will happen at his second, and for that which must happen in us, in order that the first as well as the second coming may prove our salvation. *He shall prepare the way before me.* Every minister of the Church, and every Christian, in the most private circle, can prepare the way of the Lord by warning and teaching, by example and intercession, but he is only a servant, and must wait in the humility and patience of the Lord Himself. Everything in the world is easier to be calculated, than the day when the Lord comes, and easier to be endured than his coming. *He shall sit as a refiner's fire.* The refining of the Lord has its day, and the day of the Lord has its refining. What salutary terror, and what strong consolation must this comparison of the divine refiner work in us!

The purifying fire is at hand to us all. It brings with it a torture, for which the world has no soothing balm; it penetrates what is most secret and inmost; it makes manifest whether we shall be acknowledged by the Lord, or cast away. If we would be the Lord's, then we may say, The Lord sits, and has his eyes fixed upon me even in the furnace, and especially there. He intends only my purification, and should the smallest grain of gold in faith and love be found in me, He does not cast me away with the dross of this world; and his design is that his image may be reflected in me, and that I may be acceptable to Him. The prayer of humility and faith is, O Lord, though thou shouldst find no gold in me, let me only be found as useful silver.

Ver. 5. How suddenly and how deeply will the day of judgment interrupt the pursuits of the world! How suddenly! for the prophet says, "suddenly," and "a swift witness," so that the world will be surprised in the midst of its pursuits. How deeply! for all unrighteous actions and causes, however great, or little, will be rejudged, and brought to light in their ungodliness. Job was able to comfort himself with the word, "My witness is in heaven!" — the opposite of the threatening word, "a swift witness:" hence the question comes up, Have I a witness in heaven to fear? What does He see with his all-seeing eye? and what sentence will He hereafter pass upon me with his all-decisive lips?

SECTION V.

The People are rebuked for withholding the legal Tithes and Offerings.

CHAPTER III. 7-12.

- 7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the
8 Lord of Hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob¹ [defraud] God? Yet [that, Köhler, Keil, Pressel], ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.² [In tithe and heave offering.]

- 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for [yet] ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.
 10 Bring ye all the tithes⁸ [tithe] into the storehouse⁴ [treasury], that there may be meat [food, Vulgate *cibus*] in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not⁵ open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*⁶ [to superabundance].
 11 And I will rebuke⁷ the devourer for your sakes,⁸ and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit¹⁰ before the time in
 12 the field, saith the Lord of Hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 8. — קָבַע, found only in Prov. xxii. 3: to cheat, defraud. The Fut. is used here in the sense of: dare a man rob God.

2 Ver. 8. — הַתְּרוּמָה. The heave-offering.

3 Ver. 10. — The whole tithe.

4 Ver. 10. — אוֹצָר, storehouse, or treasury; Neh. xiii. 12.

5 Ver. 10. — אִם-לֹא, not an oath, *whether not*.

6 Ver. 10. — י means need, lack.

7 Ver. 10. — בִּלְ negates the idea — beyond sufficiency.

8 Ver. 11. — נָצַר, to rebuke. In ch. ii. 3, it is translated, corrupt. לָבֶם, dative of use, profit.

9 Ver. 11. — The LXX. read, אֲשַׁחֵת, I will destroy.

10 Ver. 11. — תִּשְׁכַּח, miscarry, applied to the vine.

11 Ver. 11. — יִשְׁחָת. The future is here used contingently, to denote a probable future occurrence. See Nordheimer, 993, 1.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 7. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. After Jehovah had announced the coming judgment for the long-continued transgressions of the people, He adds a gracious promise, as in Zech. i. 3: "Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord, and I will return unto you." In self-righteous delusion, supposing that they lack nothing, and need no repentance, they inquire, *Wherein*, in what particular, shall we return? The prophet thereupon shows them their sin. They do what no man should attempt. They try to defraud God in the tithe and heave-offering, either by not paying them at all, or not paying them as they should. The word קָבַע, which occurs besides only in Proverbs xxii. 3, where it is translated, *spoil*, means here, as the connection shows, *defraud*, *overreach*, *cheat*.

Ver. 8. Will a man rob (or defraud) God? The Prophet appeals to their conscience for a decision as to the baseness of their conduct. But ye have robbed, or defrauded, me, or, That ye have robbed me. This is a reason of the previous question, *since* you have defrauded me.

In tithe and offering. This is a specification of the manner in which they had robbed God. In Neh. xiii. 10 we find a striking coincidence with this verse. "I perceived, that the portions of the Levites had not been given them. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, wine, and oil."

The tithe, according to Lev. xxvii. 30, and Dent. xiv. 22, was of the corn, wine, and oil, and of the firstlings of the flock and herd, for the maintenance of the Levites. The heave-offering — for that is here referred to — was the portion of the priests. "Ye shall give the heave-offering to the priests." It was partly a free-will offering, and partly prescribed by the law. They withheld tithes, notwith-

standing that God had already visited them with severe punishment, which aggravated their guilt. They had been cursed, as we learn from the following verses, with failure of the harvest and famine. This curse corresponded to their sin. As they had refused to give God his due by withholding the tithes and offerings, so had He withheld from them the products of the field.

Ver. 9. Ye are cursed with a curse. The position of the noun before the verb is here highly emphatic. Yet me ye defraud. It is not necessary to regard the ׀ as causal.

Ver. 10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse. The prophet now enlarges upon the mode of recovering the divine favor. Israel should not, as before, keep back a part of the tithes, but should pay the whole without defrauding Jehovah, that there might be food for the priests and Levites. Notwithstanding Jehovah was angry with the priests, yet He cannot suffer the people to withhold the tithe.

Storehouse. This same word is translated, Neh. xiii. 12, *treasuries*. We find in 2 Chronicles xxxi. 11, mention of chambers in the Temple, into which they were to bring the tithes. In Neh. x. 38, the Levites were to bring the tithe to the chambers, into the treasure-house.

Prove me now herewith. The object of the proof of Jehovah was not, whether He would be faithful to his promise, for this was not the subject under discussion, but whether He was a holy and righteous God, for this had been called in question by them. They were now to put Him to the test, and learn by the result of the experiment, in what relation He stood to them, and also learn, that as He had manifested Himself as a holy God in his severity, so He would also do so in his goodness, and the abundance of the blessings conferred upon those who keep His commandments.

If I will not open the windows of heaven

This is to be regarded as an indirect question, *whether* I will not. *Open the windows.* We read of the windows of heaven in Gen. vii. 11, 2 Kings vii. 2. The copious blessing is here compared to rain coming down from heaven.

And pour out upon you a blessing till there is not sufficiency of room. The word *נֶאֱמַר* means, *sufficiency*, and *room* is to be understood, as in Zech. x. 10: "and *place* shall not be found for them," where *place* is to be supplied, as here *room*. *נֶאֱמַר* negatives the idea of the noun as in Is. v. 14. The interpretation, *forever*, adopted by Wordsworth: "Till there be not enough, till my abundance is exhausted; and since this can never be, therefore it means, forever," is strained and unnatural. The Septuagint has translated it: "Until there should be enough."

Ver. 11. And I will rebuke the devourer. This verse describes in detail what blessings Jehovah's coming will bring with it. Jehovah will take away everything which would injure the fruits. The devourer, that is, the locust, shall no more ravage the land. The corn and wine shall flourish. The grapes shall not fall before they ripen.

Ver. 12. And all nations shall call you blessed. The consequence of Jehovah's blessing will be, that the land will be an object of pleasure to every one. We find similar language in Zech. viii. 13: "As ye were a curse among the heathen, so shall ye be a blessing."

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

From MATT. HENRY: On *Return unto me* (ver. 7). What a gracious invitation God gives them to return and repent! *Return unto me*, and to your duty, return to your service, return to your allegiance, return as a traveller that has missed his way, as a soldier that has run from his colors, as a treacherous wife that has gone away from her husband; return, thou backsliding Israel, return to me; and then I will return unto you, and be reconciled, will remove the judgments you are under and prevent those you fear. What a peevish answer they return to this gracious invitation! *Wherein shall we return.* Note: God takes notice what returns our hearts make to the calls of his Word, what we say, and what we think when we have heard a sermon; what answer we give to the message sent us. When God calls us to *return* we should answer, as they did (Jer. iii. 22): Behold, we come, but not as these here, *Wherein shall we return?* They take it as an affront to be told of their faults, and called upon to amend them; they are ready to say, What ado do these prophets make about *returning and repenting*. They are so

ignorant of themselves, and of the strictness, extent, and spiritual nature of the divine law, that they see nothing in themselves to be repented of; they are pure in their own eyes, and think they need no repentance. Many ruin their souls by baffling the calls to repentance.

HOMILETICAL.

PRESSEL: On ver. 10. *Prove me now herewith.* The condescending goodness of God gives not only to the godly, but sometimes even to the ungodly, opportunity and even a challenge to prove his truth and almightiness; and it is the duty of a minister of God now, as it was then of the Prophet Malachi, not only to point both classes to it, but even to offer to them this proving of God, confident as Elijah was against Ahab, and as Isaiah was against Ahaz, that God will not forsake his servants, but will by the event put to shame all unbelief.

On ver. 13. We are very apt to complain of God's providences, when extraordinary afflictions and troubles put men out of patience, or when we read or hear of extraordinary accidents, but where a heart stands firm in the fear and love of God, what the Apostle John says: "His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin," is true of it.

On vers. 10-12. How much depends upon our giving ourselves wholly as an offering to the Lord! The offerings which the Lord now requires are our own hearts, and all that comes from them. But if the Lord was so strict in tithes, how much more so is He with our hearts! Dost thou wish the full blessing of God, then be exact in whatever is thy duty. What is our duty? Whatever God requires of us, whether great or little, whether his service or an every-day life. How can he who is not strict in his duty hope, or even pray for the full blessing of God?

On vers. 14, 15. The vain service of God, He serves God in vain who serves Him only outwardly. He who serves Him from the heart has never served Him in vain. God is not man. It sometimes is the case with men that an outward service only receives an unmerited reward, or that he who serves another from the heart does not receive his due reward, for men can be deceived; but this can never be the case with God, for He is omniscient and faithful. All things are under God's providence. The contrary seems to be the case in the history of the world and in daily experience, and men without conscience lose thereby their faith; but this is only so in appearance, for the inward testimony of the heart and eternity will make plain the most difficult and frowning providences, and sometimes in this world, God's holy and righteous government is clearly manifested.

SECTION VI.

The Coming of a Day of Judgment which will vindicate the Ways of God, and reward the Righteous and punish the Wicked. Elijah the Prophet.

CHAPTERS III. 13-IV. 6.

13 Your words have been stout [bold] against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say,
14 What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve

- God: and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully [gloomily] before [because of Jehovah] the Lord of Hosts!
- 15 And now ¹ we call the proud happy; yea they that work wickedness are set up;
- 16 yea, ² *they* that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared the Lord spake often ³ [nothing corresponding to *often* in Hebrew] one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance ⁴ was written before him for them
- 17 that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ⁵ [or possession];
- 18 and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return ⁶ [again], and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

CHAPTER IV. 1-6.

- 1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all [plural in LXX., Targum, and eighty MSS.] that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave
- 2 them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun [fem. as in Gen. xv. 17; Jer. xv. 9; Nah. iii. 17] of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up ⁷ [leap for joy] as calves of the stall.
- 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of
- 4 your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the Lord of Hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* [strike out: *with*] the [as] statutes and judgments [precepts]. Behold,
- 5 I will send you Elijah the prophet ⁸ before the coming of the great and dreadful day
- 6 of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to [על, to or together with] the children [sons], and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 15. — עֵתָּה, a particle of inference, chaps. i. 9, ii. 1. (Ewald, 353.)
- 2 Ver. 15. — The second בָּ marks a climax. Nordh. 1096.
- 3 Ver. 16. — Spake often. The same word is used in ver. 13, and translated, spoken. The word *often* is not in the Hebrew.
- 4 Ver. 16. — Remembrance (זִכְרוֹן), found in Ex. xxviii. 29; Num. x. 10.
- 5 Ver. 17. — סִגְלָה, jewels (Ex. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6; xxvi. 18).
- 6 Ver. 18. — Return, שׁוּב, is used here as in i. 4, as an adverb, again (Gen. xiv. 2).
- 7 Chap. iv. 2. — Grow up. פִּשְׁתָּם, frisk. LXX.: σκιρτάν (Hab. i. 8).
- 8 Ver. 5. — LXX.: Ἠλίαν τὸν θεσβιτην. The Masora directs that this verse should be repeated after the last verse, so that the book may not end with a curse.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 13. Your words have been bold against me. Jehovah through the Prophet, now shows the people that their murmuring against Him and his service as unprofitable is unjust. Hengstenberg and Reinke suppose that there is a dialogue between the Prophet and the people, that they reply to the Prophet's words, and contradict them. Jehovah has said, *Prove* me now herewith? They reply, The wicked prove God, and are delivered. The Prophet says: They shall call you happy. They answer: And now we call the wicked happy. The Prophet says: Ye have not observed mine ordinances. The people reply: We have observed them. But as this view is too ingenious, and the Niph'al is used, They spake *one to another*, they conversed about God, and as it is analogous to ii. 17, Ye have wearied me with your words, we must reject it.

Your words are stout, that is, bold, *presumptuous, impudent*. We have the substance of them,

that it was profitless to serve God, since He was not a righteous God, and that therefore they are to be called happy who sought to secure their earthly well-being, without regard to God. Such hard speeches of ungodly sinners against God never pass the lips of a pious Asaph or Job, not even in the times of sorest trial, and in hours of the deepest darkness. They, though uttering despairing feeling, never draw such conclusions, nor go so far as to renounce God. Some have found the atheism of these sinners in the phrase *serve God*, instead of *serve Jehovah*.

Ver. 14. We have kept his ordinance. We have observed all the prescribed rites. Walked mournfully, to go about in sackcloth, to neglect their appearance in token of fasting, and for the sake of Jehovah. They lay stress upon fasting, whether prescribed or voluntary, which was regarded as more meritorious. They attributed worth to the opus operatum of fasting, a disposition attacked by Isaiah in chap. lviii., which increased after the Captivity, until it culminated in the fasting twice in the week of the Pharisees.

They felt that they had claims upon God, and complained that He did not reward them for it.

Ver. 15. And now we call the proud happy. In consequence of the supposed uselessness of their piety, and the adversity in which Jehovah suffered them to remain, they, unlike Asaph, offend against the generation of God's children by speaking thus, and begin to call the haughty sinners happy, as those who have chosen the best part. We must again regard the *proud* here as in chap. ii. 17, as godless sinners in Israel. They must be the same with the proud in chap. iv. 1, which Hengstenberg admits refers to sinners in Zion, though here he refers it to the heathen. The heathen are spoken of as the objects of the divine punishment, only when they have harmed God's people, and never where the sins of his people are rebuked. The people now give the reason why they considered the haughty sinners happy. They appeal to the matter of fact, that, though the wicked have put God to the test by their sins, calling down the vengeance of heaven, yet they have been unpunished, and their condition is therefore to be envied. The two clauses correspond to each other, and are placed in a reciprocal relation to each other by the double *yea* (וְעַתָּה).

Ver. 16. Then they that feared the Lord spake one to another. The prophet now in a narrative form gives the speeches of the godly in contrast with the hard speeches of the ungodly. There were a faithful few who feared God with a holy fear, and who valued his name, who, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, believed that verily THERE WAS a God judging the earth. The language of the ungodly was the occasion of their speaking *together*, not, *often*, as in our version. It was *then* (כֵּן) they testified their faith in God. We need not adopt the view of Maurer and Hitzig, that *vav. conv.* is to be translated *that*, and begins the quotation of their very words, for this is contrary to usage. We have not the substance of their conversation. Jerome imagines that it was a defense of God's dealings, which is doubtless correct. They sighed and cried for the abominations of the times (Ezekiel ix. 4). Horror took hold of them because of the wicked who forsook God's law, and they exhorted one another daily not to lose their faith in God, as holy and righteous. Their conduct and words pleased God, and to show the certainty of their reward He is represented as recording their names and good deeds in a book of remembrance, lest He should forget to reward them. Some have found an allusion to the custom of ancient kings keeping books, in which all the most important events of their reigns were recorded, as in Esther vi. 1, 2, but it rests upon a much older and Scriptural idea, that the names and actions of the righteous are written in a book before God (Ps. lvi. 9; Dan. vii. 10). The Pirke Avoth, a collection of the sayings of the Rabbis, quotes this passage, and the comment of Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion: "Where two sit together, and there are no words of the law spoken between them, there is the seat of the scorner of whom it is said, 'He sitteth not in the seat of the scorner;' but where two sit together, and words of the law are spoken between them, there dwells the Shekinah among them, as it is written, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.'"

Ver. 17. And they shall be mine, etc. We find the additional promise, *They shall be to me a*

peculiar treasure, not *jewels*, specifically, as in our version. The accents make יָדָהּ (possession), the object of *make*, but most of the recent commentators, following the LXX, the Targum, and Jerome, regard it as the predicate of, *They shall be to me. They shall be my possession in the day which I make, or appoint.* In favor of this, we find the same words in Ex. xix. 5, to which this verse doubtless refers. "Ye shall be to me a *peculiar possession* out of all nations," and also in Deut. vii. 6: "The Lord, thy God, hath chosen thee to be to Him a people of *possession*." Further, in ch. iv. 3, we find the same phrase as here, *the day I make, or appoint.* In the New Testament, this language is borrowed from the LXX, to represent the relation of believers to God, as in 1 Pet. ii. 9; Eph. i. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 14; Titus ii. 14, where we find a *peculiar people*, where the same word, *περίποίησιν*, is used, as in the Septuagint translation of this passage.

I will spare them — manifest tender compassion to them, as a man spareth not his son merely, but his son, who serveth him, who is filial and obedient. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13).

Ver. 18. Then shall ye again discern between. The subject of the verb must be the wicked murmurers, and not, as Henderson thinks, the righteous. The wicked had arraigned God's justice, now they shall be forced to acknowledge it in their own punishment. The word *שָׁמַר* in Hebrew is sometimes used as an adverb. It is so regarded here by Köhler, Keil, Gesenius, Henderson, and others. Hengstenberg and Keil find in ver. 18 a reference to Ex. xi. 7, where it is said: "The Lord put a *difference* between the Egyptians and Israel." Köhler understands by it, that the wicked would now stand in a different relation to the question than they did before, that they would, in the future, in consequence of Jehovah's judgments, recognize that difference. Calvin understands it, "if a different state of things." We are not to put too much emphasis upon it, nor need we refer it to any special case. The preposition *between*, seems to be used here as a noun, though not strictly such, in the sense of *difference*. The time will come, when ye will see *the between* in relation to the righteous and the wicked, as in Is. lrv. 13, 14: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall howl for vexation of spirit."

Ch. iv. 1. For, behold, the day cometh. In Hebrew, there are but *three* chapters in Malachi, the third chapter containing twenty-four verses, instead of eighteen, as in our version. Most of the modern versions begin unnecessarily here a new chapter. The prophet now describes the results of that appointed day, first to the wicked (ver. 19), and then to the righteous, in vers. 20, 24.

Behold, the day cometh! We find similar language in Zeph. i. 15: "*That day is a day of wrath, Dies Ire, Dies Illa*, and in Joel ii. 31, where we find "*the great and terrible day of the Lord*." Some have referred the day here spoken of to the destruction of Jerusalem, others to the last great day. While it is to receive its fulfillment in the last day, yet it is capable of more than one fulfillment. It is fulfilled in every coming to judgment. As Wordsworth says: "All God's judgments are hours, marked on the dial-plate, and struck by the alarm of that great day." The destruction of Jerusalem

was but the fiery and blood-red dawn of that day of days. To the ungodly it will be like a furnace, where the fire burns most fiercely, and which scorches and consumes everything which comes near it. They that do wickedly will then be as the dry chaff, which is utterly consumed. Isaiah uses the same figure; v. 21; and Obadiah, i. 18; Zech. xii. 6; Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17.

That it shall leave, etc. The ~~verb~~ ^{verb} here is not a relative pronoun, as Maurer and Reinke suppose, but a conjunction; so Keil, Köhler, and Ewald, *so that neither root nor branch*, a proverb, to express utter destruction; not one shall escape.

John the Baptist made this verse the text of his exhortations when he spoke of the axe laid to the root of the tree, and the chaff burnt with unquenchable fire.

Ver. 2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise. Jehovah now turns, and directly addresses the righteous, and promises them that the Sun of Righteousness will rise upon them. There has been much difference of opinion as to whether the Sun of Righteousness was to be understood *personally* of Christ, or whether it is only a genitive of apposition — the sun, which is righteousness, or, righteousness, as a sun. The Fathers, Eusebius, Cyril, Theodoret, the early Protestant commentators, and a majority of modern ones, refer it to Christ, while the Jewish commentators, and Hengstenberg, Keil, Reinke, Köhler, refer it to the consummation of salvation, in which Jehovah's righteousness reveals itself to the godly. Hengstenberg admits that the interpretation which refers it to Christ is well founded, though he does not find in it a distinct allusion to the person of Christ. Keil, while interpreting it, that righteousness, that is, salvation, is regarded as a sun, yet concedes that the personal view is founded upon a truth, that the coming of Christ brings righteousness. Henderson remarks: "There can be no doubt with respect to the application," and refers to the passage where Christ is called the light of men, the light of the world, a great light (Is. ix. 1), a light to the Gentiles (Is. xlix. 6), the true light, the day-spring from on high. Moore remarks: "We cannot think that the prophet here meant to predict Christ personally, or, indeed, to look at the ground of this righteousness at all." We think it safer, from the parallel passages, from exegetical tradition, and from the internal evidence, commending itself to every believing heart, and which has found expression in hymns, and in the recorded religious history of multitudes, to understand this sublime figure not of an abstract righteousness, but of a personal Christ.

Healing in its wings. The beams of this sun are compared to the outstretched wings of a bird, to which they bear some resemblance. The figure is not to be carried out so far as to refer to the swiftness of a bird, or to the protection of her young by the mother bird, but is to be confined simply to healing. . . Healing or salvation comes to the God-fearing through the wings, or beams of this sun, shining fully upon them. As when the sun returns to the earth in spring time, all nature rejoices in its light and warmth, so the righteous shall be awaked to a new life by the beams of this sun.

And ye shall go forth, and leap as calves. The righteous shall go forth from darkness, and their joy is compared, in a simple and childlike

manner, to that of calves, let loose from the stall to go to pasture, who frisk and leap for joy.

Ver. 3. They shall be ashes. The wicked, who have troubled them, shall be as little regarded by them as the ashes trodden under foot of men.

Ver. 4. Remember ye the law of Moses. Now follows an exhortation as to the way in which the coming judgment is to be averted. We have here the conclusion of the whole book, and the appropriate sealing up of the Old Testament. There is in it an intimation, that no further communications are to be made. As they had gone away from God's law, now they must give all diligence to observe and obey it. The Septuagint, it is difficult to see for what reason, has transposed this verse, and placed it at the end of the book, where it is out of place, as it serves as the introduction to the promise of John the Baptist, and the reformation to be wrought by him. Hengstenberg and Reinke suppose the reason of the transposition is to be found in the great importance of the precept, but the more probable reason is, that it was done, as in other cases, to avoid too harsh a sound in the last verse.

Which I commanded him, not whom I commanded, as Ewald, Reinke, and Bunsen. Jehovah calls attention to the divine authority and origin of the law. Moses was but the servant of Jehovah.

Statutes and Judgments. These words are found in the same combination in Deut. iv. 8, and may be construed as an exegetical definition, be longing to *which*, or with Köhler, as the predicate which are statutes and judgments.

Ver. 5. Behold I will send Elijah the prophet. We have here a repetition of the promise in ch. iii. 1 in a more specific form. Behold, I will send Elijah, not the Tishbite, as the Septuagint has it, but Elijah the prophet. But why is John the Baptist here called Elijah? The angel before his birth said unto his father, Zacharias, "And he shall go before Him in the *spirit* and *power* of Elijah." There were many points of resemblance between Elijah and John. Both prophesied in a time of great unbelief and apostasy from the law; both sought to bring back the people to the piety of their fathers; both prophesied before great and terrible judgments. The historical circumstances in which they lived were remarkably parallel. Ahab reappears in Herod, Jezebel in Herodias. The words of Mark vi. 20, where he speaks of Herod, fearing John, and did many things, apply without any alteration to Ahab. Their very appearance, the fashion of their dress, and their mode of life, were identical. Bengel says of John, "Even the dress and food of John were in accordance with his teaching and office. The minister of repentance led the same life as penitents themselves should lead." His mode of life was a sermon *de facto* on mortification. We may thus clearly see why John should be called in prophecy, which, for the most part, suppresses names, and which throws a thin veil of obscurity over its subjects, *Elijah*, just as Jesus himself was called David, because he was the son and successor of David (Hosea iii. 5; Ez. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; Jer. xxx. 9). The interpretation of this prophecy, that Elijah was to reappear before the coming of the Messiah, has been universally held by the Jews, and the obstinacy with which they have clung to this opinion, received by tradition from their fathers, has been a great hindrance to their receiving Jesus as the Christ. In this interpretation, they have been countenanced by most of the

Fathers, as Chrysostom, Origen, Cyril, Theodoret, Theophylact, Jerome, Tertullian, Augustine, who held to two Elijahs of prophecy, the one, John the Baptist, and the other, Elijah in person, who was to reappear, to convert the Jews, and prepare the way for the second coming of the Lord. The Romish commentators, in consequence of this consent of the Fathers, have held it a heresy, or next to a heresy, to reject this interpretation. Some few modern Protestant commentators, as Hitzig, Maurer, Ewald, Olshausen, Alford, Stier, and Ryle, have adopted the same view. Alford says: "John the Baptist only *partially* fulfilled the great prophecy, which announced the *real Elias* (the words of Malachi will hardly bear any other than a personal meaning) who is to forerun the second and greater coming."

We have two most important declarations of our Lord's on the Elijah of Malachi. Speaking of John the Baptist, he said: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I will send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. And if ye will receive it, This is Elias, who was to come." Here our Lord declares that John fulfilled both prophecies in Malachi, and that he was his forerunner. And further, that so obstinate were their foregone conclusions, that He did not expect they would believe it.

In Matthew xvii. 10, "His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Then understood his disciples, that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.'" We would remark, that this conversation was soon after the Transfiguration of our Lord, when Elijah appeared. Sharing the common Jewish opinion, and supposing his residence with our Saviour would be a permanent one, they were perplexed at his disappearance. Their question led our Lord to speak of the prophecy of Malachi, and to place *Himself at the time of its utterance*, when the coming of Elijah as John was yet *future*. Hence He uses the *future* in speaking of John's agency. Alford infers from the use of the future, that Elijah is yet to reappear, but it can be easily explained in the way which has been done.

Again, the denial of John (John i. 21) has been made use of by the few Protestant commentators who have held the view of another Elijah. John did not deny to the deputation from the Sanhedrim, that he was the Elijah of Malachi. This he affirms, when he says, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord;" but that he was Elijah *in their sense*, Alford finds in, *If ye will receive it*, a confirmation of his views, but this expression strengthens the exclusive reference to John the Baptist, that it was so plain, that nothing but the most inveterate prejudice prevented their acknowledging it.

Before the coming of the great and dreadful day. This expression, the *great and terrible day*, is found in Joel ii. 31. The day (ch. iii. 17, iv. 1-5) throughout has the same meaning. It refers especially to the destruction of Jerusalem. When the Lord Jesus came, it was not only to give eter-

nal life to those who received Him, but for judgment upon those who rejected Him. His coming was necessarily followed by the condemnation of the unbelieving. The Gospel is always a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. But these words have more than one fulfillment. The last and perfect one will be in the last day.

Ver. 6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children. Some commentators, among whom are Ewald, Maurer, and Henderson, understand this of a restoration of family harmony, but it is better to understand it of a reconciliation between the ungodly, estranged from the piety of their ancestors, and their pious forefathers, produced by repentance. Thus the bond of union, which had been broken, will be restored. That such is the meaning is proved by Luke i. 16, 17, where "the disobedient to the wisdom, or disposition, of the just," is substituted, as containing the same sense.

Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. By the earth here is meant, the land of Israel. The word, *קִלְקִלָּה*, *curse*, means anything devoted to the Lord, and is sometimes used in a good sense, as in Lev. xxvii. 28. More generally, however, in a *bad* sense, as in Zech. xiv. 11, where it is translated, *utter destruction*, the ban of extermination.

The close of the Old Testament in Malachi is unspeakably solemn. On its last leaf we find the blessing and the curse, life and death, set before us. As its first page tells us of the sin and curse of our first parents, so its last speaks of the law given by Moses, of sin, and the curse following, mingled with promises of the grace which was to come by Jesus Christ. So on the last page of the New Testament, we read of "plagues written in this book," but its last words are gracious words: "Surely I come quickly! Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen."¹

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

WORDSWORTH: "The concluding sentence of Malachi is a solemn warning to these latter days. The Holy Spirit knows what is best for us. He warns us of future punishment, in order that we may escape it, and that we may inherit everlasting glory. Knowing the terror of the Lord, he would persuade men. And the character of these latter days, when the Evil One is endeavoring to lure men into his own grasp, and to make them his victims forever, by dissolving God's attributes into one universal fullness of indiscriminating love; and by endeavoring to persuade them that his justice and holiness are mere ideal theories and visionary phantoms, and that there is no judgment to come, and that the terrors of hell are but a dream, in defiance of the clear words of Him who is the Truth (Mark ix. 44; Matt. xxv. 46), shows that there is divine foresight in this warning by Malachi. Let it not be forgotten that the Apostle of love, St. John, ends his Epistle with a warning against idolatry, and that at the close of the Apocalypse, there is a solemn declaration against all who tamper with any words of that book, which

fulfilled, that Elias has already come, and that they may with us unite in the prayer, which every believing and loving soul continually prays: Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

¹ Aben Ezra, at the close of his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, says: "May God soon fulfill the prophecy of Elijah, and hasten his coming!" Rather may we pray that the veil may be taken from the hearts of the Jews, so that they may believe that this prophecy has been

speaks in the clearest terms concerning judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity. May we have grace so to profit by this solemn warning, that we may escape the malediction of those on the left hand at the great day, and inherit the blessing which will be pronounced to those on the right hand by the almighty and everlasting Judge! Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!

KEIL: After Malachi, no prophet arose in Israel until the time was fulfilled, when the Elijah predicted by him appeared in John the Baptist, and immediately afterwards the Lord came to his temple, that is to say, the incarnate Son of God to his own possession, to make all who receive Him children of God. Upon the Mount of Transfiguration, there appeared both Moses, the founder of the Law, and mediator of the Old Covenant, and Elijah the prophet, as the restorer of the law in Israel, who earnestly prayed, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou hast turned their heart back again!" to talk with Jesus of his decease, for a practical testimony to us all, that Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for us, to bear our sin, and redeem us from the curse of the law, was the beloved Son of the Father, whom we are to hear, that by believing in his name we may become children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.

M. HENRY on Malachi iii. 14: *Walked mournfully*. They insisted much upon it, that they had walked mournfully before God, whereas God had required them to serve Him with gladness and to walk cheerfully before Him. They by their own superstitions made the service of God a task and drudgery to themselves, and then complained of it as a hard service. The yoke of Christ is *easy*; it is the yoke of Antichrist that is *heavy*. They complained that they had got nothing by their religion; they denied a future state, and then said: It is vain to serve God, which has indeed some color in it, for if in this life only we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable.

NOTE.—Those do a great deal of wrong to God's honor, who say that religion is either an *unprofitable* or an *unpleasant* thing; for the matter is not so; wisdom's ways are *pleasantness*, and wisdom's gains are better than that of fine gold.

M. HENRY on ver. 16. *They spake often, etc.* Even in that corrupt and degenerate age, there were some that retained their integrity and zeal for God. In every age, there has indeed some remnant that feared the Lord, though sometimes but a little remnant. They *thought upon his name*; they seriously considered, and frequently meditated upon the discoveries God had made of Himself, and their meditation of Him was sweet. They consulted the honor of God, and aimed at that as their ultimate end in all they did. They spake often one to another concerning the God they feared, and that name of his, which they thought so much of; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak; and a good man out of the good treasure of his heart will bring forth good things. They that feared the Lord kept together as those that were company for each other; they spake kindly and endearingly one to another, for the preserving and promoting mutual love, that that night not wax cold when iniquity did thus abound. They spake edifyingly to one another, for the increase of faith and holiness; they spake one to another in the language of Canaan; when profaneness was to come to so great a height as to trample upon all that is sacred, then they spake

often one to another. *The worse others are, the better we should be; when vice is daring, let not virtue be sneaking.* They were industrious to arm themselves and one another against the contagion by mutual instructions and encouragements, and to strengthen one another's hands. As evil communications corrupt good minds and manners, so good communications confirm them.

MOORE: When the wicked are talking against God, the righteous should talk for Him. Religious conversation is necessary, all the more, for the very reasons that often chill and repress it. When a fire burns low, the coals that are alive should be brought near together, that they may be blown into a flame. So when all is cold and dead, living Christians should draw near and seek the breathings of the Spirit, and kindle each other by mutual utterance. The words thus and then spoken shall be heard and recorded in heaven.

DODDRIDGE has versified vers. 16, 17:—

The Lord on mortal worms looks down
From his celestial throne;
And when the wicked swarm around,
He well discerns his own.

The chronicles of heaven shall keep
Their words in transcript fair;
In the Redeemer's book of life,
Their names recorded are.

WORDSWORTH: Malachi, as successor to Zechariah, discharged a peculiar office. Zechariah is one of the most sublime and impassioned among "the goodly fellowship" of the Prophets. The light of the sunset of prophecy is as brilliant and glorious as its noonday splendors. The prophecy of Zechariah is an impetuous torrent, sweeping along in a violent stream, dashing over rugged rocks, and hurling itself down in headlong cataracts, and carrying everything with it in its foaming flood. In Malachi, it tempers its vehemence in the clear haven of a translucent pool; there it rested in peace for four hundred years, till it flowed forth again in the Gospel.

M. HENRY, on ch. iv. ver. 4: Observe the honorable mention that is made of *Moses*, the first writer of the Old Testament, in *Malachi*, the last writer. God calls him *Moses, my servant*, for the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. See how the penmen of Scripture, though they lived at a great distance of time from each other (it was twelve hundred years from Moses to Malachi) concurred in the same thing, all actuated and guided by one and the same spirit.

PRESSEL: We meet sometimes in the Old Testament with passages, like flowers among the rocks, which anticipate the New Testament. Of this kind are the few passages in which God is regarded not as Lord but as Father (Deut. xxxii. 6; 2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 27, ciii. 13; Is. lxiii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 20; Hos. i. 10; Mal. iii. 17). God appears in them indeed more as the Father of the whole nation, than in a personal relation to individuals. The joyfulness of the sonship of individuals does not attain prominence, and it was not the prevailing consciousness of the whole people; but these few traces of the fatherhood of God disclose the continuity of both Testaments. The relation, which was not possible for the Old Testament Church, the New Covenant has granted us through Jesus Christ, and what the New has thus granted, the Old had already foreshadowed.

Though the prophecy of Malachi, of the coming of the Messiah, of the judgment accompanying it, and of the sending of the forerunner, contains

nothing at all which would lead us to suppose that the first coming would find its fulfillment in a second at the end of days, before which time there should happen his rejection by his people, his redeeming work on Golgotha, and the whole history of the spread of his Gospel even to the ends of the earth, yet nothing can be concluded from this against the truth, that this last prophecy of the Old Testament had *begun* to be fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth; for the occasion and design of this last prophecy had nothing to do with the subsequent events; for God reveals to his faithful people at every stage, and under all relations, only just so much as they need. The Old Testament has sufficiently disclosed the most glorious glimpses into the Messianic future, as special Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and other books testify, but here the object is only to enforce on the light-minded and scoffing contemporaries of the prophet the ineffaceable difference between the godly and ungodly, and the certainty of the day in which that difference would be revealed to all eyes. It was for this object, that what God communicated to them through his prophets of the coming of the Lord, and the sending of his Forerunner, was exactly what they needed.

Vers. 16, 17. *Then they that feared the Lord.* What is the frivolity and scorn of the world, when compared with the refuge of the pious in the word of God, in the communion of those like-minded, in prayer, and in a blessed hereafter!

The Lord knoweth them that are his! This Holy Scripture everywhere testifies. Does also the Spirit of God testify it to our spirits?

The names of those who are registered in our church books are not all found in God's book of remembrance. As it was a great privilege to be numbered among the people of Israel, so it is one now to be numbered in our church books as a Christian; but as then there was a difference between those whose names were in God's book, and those who were not, so it is still now.

"In thy fair book of life and grace,
O may I find my name,
Recorded in some humble place,
Beneath my Lord, the Lamb."

This is the highest distinction to which man can attain: all others are but a shadow, when compared with it. It is a distinction most undeserved, and yet promised to the sincere and pious. It excludes all merit, and yet it is a reward of true piety.

Ch. iv. 1. *For behold the day comes!*

"That day of wrath! that dreadful day!
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?"

Ch. iv. ver. 2. What will the day of the Lord bring to the righteous, according to the promise of the Old Testament? The Sun of righteousness; salvation under his wings; the joy of freedom; the triumph over the common enemies of the Lord and his people.

Ch. iv. vers. 4, 5. Moses and Elijah must even now go before the Lord: How far have they come to us? Or, Conversion is the turning point, where the Old Covenant ends, and the New begins: the heart begins, and the life must end.

Ver. 6. *He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.* How has the Word of God laid upon us the duty of our conversion, and that of our families! Grant me the heavenly joy, that after many a

struggle, I may with rapture say, Dearest Father. Here am I, and those whom thou hast given me! No one of them is lost! all are prepared for thy kingdom! That this may be our experience, we must strive by persevering prayer, and it will, when realized, be a matter of heavenly joy. Finally: The last word of the Old Testament is the threatening of the curse; of the New, the prayer, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" What should we wish our last word to be?

CHRYSOSTOM on, *Behold the day cometh!* Let us then imagine that that day has come, and let each one examine his reflections, and let him suppose that the Judge is already present, and that all things are revealed and published; for we must not only stand there, but also be *made manifest*. Would you not blush? would you not be beside yourselves? For if now, when the occasion is not yet present, but is merely supposed, and represented to the imagination, we are overwhelmed by our reflections, what shall we do, when that day has come, — when the whole world is present, — when angels and archangels, when crowded myriads, and the hurrying to and fro of all have come; and we are caught up in the clouds, and the gathering together full of terror has come; when trumpet after trumpet shall sound exceeding loud, — when all these have come? For even if there were no hell, what a punishment to be thrust out in the midst of such splendor, and to depart dishonored! For if even now, when a king and his retinue make a triumphal entry, the poor, reflecting on their poverty, receive not so much pleasure from the spectacle, as mortification, that they are not admitted to the presence of the king, nor share his favor, what will it be then! Or, do you consider it a light punishment not to be numbered in that company, not to be counted worthy of that unspeakable glory, to be thrust out from that joyful assembly, and from those unutterable blessings? When too, there shall be darkness, and gnashing of teeth, and everlasting chains, and the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched, and tribulation and anguish, and tongues parched like the rich man's; when we shall beg for mercy, but no one shall hear; when we shall groan and howl because of our torments, and no one shall heed; and look round everywhere, and nowhere shall there be any to comfort us, what shall we say to those in such a condition, what can be more wretched than their souls! what more pitiable! For if we enter a prison, and see the squalid prisoners, some bound and famishing, others shut up in darkness, we weep aloud, we shudder, and avoid imprisonment there, when we are dragged away by force into the very torments of hell, what shall become of us! For these chains are not of iron, but of fire, never to be quenched; nor are our jailers men, whom it is often possible to persuade, but angels, whom we dare not look upon, because they are exceedingly enraged, that we have insulted their Lord. We do not see *there*, as here, some bringing money, some food, others comforting words, so that the prisoners obtain some mitigation. Everything *there* is beyond the reach of alleviation. Even if Noah, or Job, or Daniel, should see their own families suffering punishment, they would not dare to relieve them. For natural sympathy is there extinguished. For while it is the case, that righteous parents have wicked children, and righteous children wicked parents, that the pleasure may there be unalloyed, and that those who enjoy the blessings may not lose their fruition from sympathy, even this nat

ural affection, I say, is extinguished, and they share in their Lord's indignation against their own offspring. For if common men, when they see their children wicked, disinherit them, and cut them off from the family, much more shall the righteous then. Therefore, let no one hope for good things, who has done no good work, though he may have ten thousand righteous ancestors, "for every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done." And here I think I will make use of this fear to attack the adulterers, and not them only, but all those who do any wrong thing whatever. Let us ourselves hear therefore these things; if you have the fire of lust, oppose to it that fire, and being extinguished, it will quickly go out. If you are about to utter anything uncharitable, reflect on the gnashing of teeth, and your fear will be a bridle to you; if you wish to steal, hear the Judge commanding and saying, "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness," and you will in this way cast out your lust; if you are a drunkard, and spend your time in debauchery, hear the rich man saying, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my parched tongue," and not obtaining his request, and you will get rid of this passion. If you love luxury, consider the tribulation and anguish there, and you will desire it no more; if you are harsh and cruel, remember those virgins who, because their lamps had gone out, were shut out of the bridal chamber, and you will soon become kind-hearted. Are you slothful? Think of him who hid the talent, and you will become more ardent than fire. Does covetousness of your neighbor's property consume you?

Think of the worm that never dies, and you will easily get rid of this disease, and will reform all other sins, for He has commanded nothing burdensome or grievous. Why then do his commandments seem grievous to us? From our slothfulness. For as when we are zealous, even those things which seem intolerable will be light and easy, so when we are slothful, the things which are tolerable will appear to us grievous. In view of all this, let us not regard those who live luxuriously, but remember their end; let us not regard the extortioners, but remember their end,—here cares and fears and anguish of soul, and there everlasting chains; let us not regard the lovers of glory, but remember what it begets,—here slavery and hypocrisy, and there intolerable loss, and perpetual burning. For if we would thus reason with ourselves, and continually oppose these and the like things to our wicked lusts, we should speedily cast out the love of the present, and kindle the love of the future. Let us now therefore kindle it, and burn with it. For if the meditation on these things, imperfect as it may be, gives such pleasure, think how much delight a perfect realization will be. Happy, thrice happy, yea, infinitely happy are those who enjoy such blessings, as wretched, thrice wretched are those who suffer their opposite! That we may not be of the latter class, but of the former, let us choose virtue, for in this way we shall obtain these future blessings. God grant that we may all obtain them, through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, power, and honor now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen!

NEW METRICAL TRANSLATION.

SECTION I.

Jehovah's distinguishing Love to Israel (Chap. i. 1-6).

- 1 The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel, by the hand of **Malachi**.
- 2 I have loved you, saith Jehovah,
And if ye say, "Wherein hast thou loved us?"
Was not Esau brother to Jacob? saith Jehovah,
And yet I loved Jacob,
- 3 And Esau I hated;
And made his mountains a desolation,
And his inheritance for the jackals of the desert.
- 4 Although Edom say, "We are ruined,
Yet will we build again the ruins;"
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts;
They may build, but I will pull down;
And men shall call them, "The land of wickedness;
And the people against whom Jehovah is angry forever."
- 5 And your eyes shall see it, and ye shall say,
Great be Jehovah over the land of Israel!

SECTION II.

Rebuke of the Priests (Chap. i. 6-ii. 9).

- 6 A son honors his father,
And a servant his master ;
But if I am a father, where is mine honor ?
And if I am a master, where is my fear ?
Saith Jehovah of Hosts to you, ye priests, that despise **my name**.
Yet ye say, " Wherewith have we despised thy name?"
- 7 In offering polluted bread upon mine altar.
And if ye say, " Wherewith have we polluted thee?"
In that ye say, " The table of the Lord is contemptible."
And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice,
(Ye say) " There is nothing evil!"
- 8 And when ye offer the lame and the sick,
(Ye say), " There is nothing evil!"
Offer it then to thy governor ;
Will he be gracious to thee,
Or accept thy person ?
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God to be **gracious unto us!**
(By your hand hath this been done!)
Will he show favor,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts ?
- 10 O that some one of you would even shut the doors,
That ye might not light the fire upon mine altar to **no purpose!**
I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
And sacrifice from your hand I will not accept.
- 11 For from the rising of the sun even to its setting,
My name shall be great among the nations,
And in every place shall incense be offered to **my name**,
And a pure offering ;
For my name shall be great among the nations.
- 12 But ye profane it,
In that ye say, " The table of the Lord is polluted,
And the fruit thereof, even its food, is contemptible."
- 13 Ye say also, Behold, what weariness!
And ye snuff at it,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
And ye bring that which is stolen, and lame, and sick,
And present it for an offering!
Shall I accept it from your hand ?
Saith Jehovah.
- 14 And cursed be the deceiver,
Who, when there is in his flock a male,
Vows and sacrifices to Jehovah that which is **blemished;**
For I am a great king, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
And my name is feared among the nations.
- 1 And now, ye priests, this sentence is to you!
2 If ye will not hearken,
If ye will not lay it to heart,
To give glory to my name, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
I will send a curse upon you,
And I will curse your blessings ;

- Yea, I have cursed them already.
 Because ye do not lay it to heart.
- 3 Behold I will rebuke for you the seed;
 And I will spread dung upon your faces,
 The dung of your solemn feasts,
 And ye shall be taken away to it.
- 4 And ye shall know that I have sent to you this sentence,
 That my covenant with Levi may continue,
- 5 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 My covenant with him was life and peace,
 And I gave them to him for fear,
 And he feared me, and revered my name.
- 6 The law of truth was in his mouth,
 And unrighteousness was not found in his lips;
 He walked with me in truth and equity,
 And turned many away from iniquity.
- 7 For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge,
 And men should seek the law from his mouth;
 For he is a messenger of Jehovah of Hosts.
- 8 But ye have departed from the way,
 Ye have caused many to stumble at the law,
 And ye have made void the covenant with Levi,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts;
 Therefore will I also make you
 Despicable and base before all the people;
 Because ye have not kept my ways,
 But have had respect to persons in the law.

SECTION III.

Rebuke of Divorce and Mixed Marriages (Chap. ii. 10-17).

- 10 Have we not all one Father?
 Hath not one God created us?
 Why do we act treacherously one toward another,
 And profane the Covenant of our fathers?
- 11 Judah hath acted treacherously,
 And an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem,
 For Judah hath profaned the holy people of Jehovah, which He loveth,
 And hath married the daughter of a strange God.
- 12 Jehovah will cut off from the tents of Jacob the man that doeth this,
 The waker and the answerer,
 And him that bringeth a sacrifice to Jehovah of Hosts.
- 13 And this second thing ye do,
 Ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears,
 With weeping, and with groans,
 So that He hath no more regard to the offering,
 Nor accepts it as well-pleasing from your hand.
- 14 And if ye say, "Wherefore? (doth He not accept?)"
 Because Jehovah has been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth.
 Against whom thou hast acted treacherously,
 While she was thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.
- 15 But did He not make one (pair)?
 Though He had a residue of the Spirit?
 And wherefore one?

- He sought a godly seed.
 Therefore take heed to your spirit,
 And act not treacherously to the wife of thy youth !
 16 For I hate divorce,
 Saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,
 And him that covers with cruelty his garment.

SECTION IV.

The Coming of the Angel of the Covenant for Judgment (Chap. ii. 17-iii. 6).

- 17 Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words,
 And if ye say, "Wherein have we wearied Him?"
 In that ye say, "Every evil doer
 Is good in the eyes of Jehovah,
 And in them He hath delight,"
 Or, "Where is the God of judgment?"
- 1 Behold, I send my messenger,
 That he may prepare the way before me;
 And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple,
 And the Angel of the Covenant, whom ye desire,
 Behold he comes, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 2 But who can endure the day of his coming?
 And who can stand at his appearing?
 For he is like the smelter's fire,
 And like the lye of the washer.
- 3 And He will sit as a smelter, and purifier of silver,
 And will purify the sons of Levi,
 And will refine them, as gold and silver,
 That they may offer to Jehovah sacrifices in righteousness.
- 4 And the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to Jehovah,
 As in the days of former times,
 And as in past years.
- 5 And I will come near to you to judgment;
 And I will be a swift witness
 Against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against those who swear for
 deceit,
 And against those who defraud the hireling of his wages,
 And oppress the widow and the fatherless,
 And turn aside the stranger from his right,
 And fear not me, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 6 For I, Jehovah, change not:
 Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

SECTION V.

Rebuke for Neglect of Tithes and Offerings (Chap. iii. 7-12).

- 7 From the days of your fathers ye have departed from mine ordinances, And have
 not kept them;
 Return to me, and I will return to you.

- Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 And ye say, "Wherein shall we return?"
 Will a man defraud God, that ye defrauded me?
 "And ye say, "Wherein have we defrauded thee?"
 In the tithe and in the heave offering.
 Ye are cursed with a curse.
 Yet ye defraud me, even the whole nation.
- 10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the treasure house,
 That there may be food in my house,
 And prove me now herewith,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 If I will not open you the windows of heaven,
 And pour out upon you a blessing till there is not room enough.
- 11 And I will rebuke for you the devourer,
 That he may not destroy the fruit of your ground,
 Nor will your vine be barren in the field,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 12 And all nations shall call you blessed,
 For ye shall be a joyful land,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.

SECTION VI.

Retribution of the Righteous and the Wicked (Chap. iii).

- 18 Your words have been bold against me, saith Jehovah;
 And ye say, "What have we spoken with one another against thee?"
- 14 Ye have said, It is a vain thing to serve God,
 And what gain is it, that we have kept his ordinance,
 And walked mournfully because of Jehovah of Hosts?
- 15 For now we call the proud happy.
 Yea, the doers of wickedness are built up,
 Yea, they have tempted God, and have been delivered.
- 16 Then those, who feared Jehovah, conversed with one another
 And Jehovah attended and heard;
 And a book of remembrance was written before Him,
 For them that feared Jehovah,
 And that thought upon his name.
- 17 And they shall be my property, saith Jehovah,
 In the day which I appoint,
 And I will spare them,
 As a man spareth his own son, that serveth him.
- 18 Then shall ye again discern
 [The difference] between the righteous and the wicked,
 Between him who serveth God,
 And him that serveth Him not.
- IV. 1 For behold the day cometh, burning like a furnace,
 And all the proud, and every doer of wickedness shall be chaff,
 And the coming day shall burn them up,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 So that it will not leave them root nor branch.
- 2 But unto you, that fear my name,
 Shall the Sun of Righteousness arise
 With healing in his wings.

- And ye shall go forth, and leap [for joy],
Like calves of the stall.
- 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet,
In the day which I appoint, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 4 Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant,
Which I commanded him upon Horeb for all Israel,
My statutes and my precepts!
- 5 Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet,
Before the day of Jehovah come,
The great and terrible day.
- 6 He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons,
And the heart of the sons to the fathers,
That I may not come
And smite the land with a curse.

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